DARA SHIKOH

by

MOIN-UD-DIN

THE CARAVAN BOOK HOUSE
KUTCHERY ROAD, LAHORE.

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The Magnificent Prince



Portrait of Prince Dara Shikoh, eldest son of Shah Jahan

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To

Hazrat Mian Mir

FOREWORD

The author of this literary piece of historical utility deserves a very high tribute of our appreciation, particularly because he put himself to this task in spite of the varied, complex and time-consuming nature of his professional duties as an army officer.

History is replete with such tragedies. The human failings or abnormalities in history are generally the consequences evolving out of the eternal law as it functions in "the survival of the fittest". The "ifs" of history remain an enigma for the historians whereas the events did and will take place according to the eternal laws of nature; evolutionary process continues all the same.

Prince Mohammad Dara Shikoh was the eldest son of the magnificent Mughal Emperor Shah Jehan. As historians tell us, the Prince was loved by his father more than his other brothers. The Prince had his early education under the supervision of his father and at the age of eleven years he was sent to Lahore as a hostage; presumably his education was not neglected there. Two years after he was put under the tutorship of Mulla Abdul Latif, who was mostly responsible for his academic training; sufficient historical evidence is not available to find out how far the Prince was equipped with the qualities of statecraft and soldiering which were the conditions precedent to hold a throne at that time. The fact can be historically established that wherever he was called upon to take the field of action he failed to achieve the desired results. We may say today that he was not trained to perform that role and hence the tragedy.

Dara was a young man of a very high intellectual calibre who was temperamentally inclined to appreciate and study the spiritual values of life and had a very strong urge to seek the "truth". He made his way to the society of the well-known, living and great saints of those days and quenched his thirst for the study of spiritual life. This urge is evidently manifest throughout his writings. This statement is based on facts: "Dara had involved

himself too much in seeking of (spiritual) knowledge and truth, which made him more of a thinker than a man of action. Probably that was the reason that he could not acquire the qualities of a military leader which usually decided the fates of the Mughal Princes."

Major Moin-ud-Din has done a useful research work in this field and has tried to reach the original works of historical value, for getting material for writing the life-story of a prince who, if rigidly put on the touchstone of the rules of methodology and historiography, will find his place nowhere in the list of successful rulers of the world. Dara's magnificence lies in his mental qualities of a very high erudition and he should be given his proper place in history.

(Colonel) S. G. MEHDI

6 September 1966

PREFACE

"Power grows out of the barrel of a gun," is an old proverb, but the art of handling and firing the gun in the right way is the privilege of a few. History is replete with such incidents, where the grand armies of great monarchs and rulers of most civilised nations lacking in discipline and courage broke and fled like a flock of sheep before a few disciplined troops led by their seasoned commanders. The carpet knights of great repute clad in costly armours, riding on their caparisoned steeds, could not withstand the well-organised onslaught of half-naked savages riding their horses even without saddles.

History has repeated this drama quite often. Great monarchs and princes lost their kingdoms, and their civilised people and men of great repute and intellect, who patronised art, sciences and literature, were butchered or made slaves—their palatial buildings were razed to the ground and their women of unstained honour, the pride of their homes and tribes, were carried away before their very eyes, to live the most destestable lives of maids or prostitutes.

In most of the cases there had been one major cause in all such calamities, that the leaders of these men paid little or no attention to the art of war and in seasoning for war their armed forces. The ease, luxury and lack of experience made their military leaders tactless in field, less devoted to exertion, inactive in mind, of little or no courage and very sensitive during a dangerous situation.

In this monograph, I reveal a like episode, but of a very mild nature. I call it mild, because in this case the two opponents were real brothers, born of the same mother and brought up under the kindness and care of a very loving and considerate father. Both were princes and were educated under the tutorship of the most reputed scholars.

Both were taught the art of war by the finest army generals. But one exercised and practised this art on the fields of battle, while the other tried to master it by reading, listening and fighting mock battles. This particular aspect of their training decided their fate and deeply affected the future course of history of this sub-continent.

The hero of this story is Prince Dara Shikoh, "Lord of Exalted Fortune," the title bestowed on him by Emperor Shah Jehan. In this book I do not intend to let down Dara Shikoh or praise his brother Aurangzeb, or otherwise—probably both considered themselves to have acted wisely according to the circumstances. My object is to throw light on some dark aspects of Dara's life and probe more deeply into his philosophy. I also intend to discuss in detail the military leadership of Dara Shikoh which, in my opinion, played a decisive role in deciding his fate. However, certain other factors having direct bearing on the subject cannot be ignored. "The history of Prince Dara Shikoh is a veritable tragedy," writes Dr. Qanungo. "A tale of sharp reverses of fortune, pathetic and melancholy. His is a painful story of virtue ensnared by craft of benefits forgotten and trust betrayed, of perverse destiny cruelly turning his own arms against himself." This tragic episode, indeed, contains some valuable lessons.

MOIN-UD-DIN

14 August 1966

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The *Diwan* of the prince is also known by the name of "Iksir-i-Azam." The prince was endowed with real poetical gifts and his verses are pleasing to the heart. But it is unfortunate that his fame as a poet and scholar could not spread because of tragic fate. This prince of noble mind and far-reaching intelligence expressed Sufistic views in his poetry. As a poet he had adopted the pen-name of Qadiri. He appears to have been very well versed in Persian literature. The English translation of certain quatrains and verses of the prince by B. J. Hasrat will be given in the following chapter.

In his *Diwan*, he commonly quotes from poets like Rumi, Jami, Nizami, Khusrau, Ghazali, Shams-i-Tabriz, Hafiz, Sadi, Khaqani and many others. It seems that Rumi and Jami are his favourite poets.

The prince patronsied many poets and scholars. Mirza Razi Danish was a poet of repute and the prince once hearing a *ghazal* gave him a reward of rupees one lac.

Chander Bhan, a Brahman, was another poet who enjoyed the prince's admiration. Once the prince asked the poet to recite before Emperor Shah Jehan. Chander Bhan recited the following verse which the prince had once admired :

"So greatly is my heart associated with infidelity, that many a time,
When I took it to Mecca, it returned a Brahman."

The Emperor was very much annoyed on hearing the verse, but Afzal Khan, a courtier, pacified him by narrating the following verse of Sadi :

"Christ's ass, even if it were to go on pilgrimage to Mecca

An ass it would remain on its return."

Some selected quatrains and verses from the *Diwan* of Dara Shikoh translated into English are given below :

1. Though I do not think myself separate from Him,
   Yet I do not consider myself God ;
   Whatever relation the drop bears to the Ocean,
   That I hold true in my belief and nothing beyond.
2. Look where you can, All is He,
   God's face is ever face to face.
3. Turn to none except God
   The rosary and sacred thread are means to an end
   (connecting link).
4. Whatever thou beholdest except Him, is the object of the
   fancy.
   Things other than He have their existence like a mirage.
   The existence of God is like a boundless ocean—
   Men are like forms and waves in its water.
5. Paradise is there where no Mulla abides,
   Where there is no argument and tumult with him.
   May the world become free from the noise of the Mulla !
   May no one pay heed to his Fatwas !
   In the city where a Mulla resides,
   No wise man is ever found.
6. How long would you interpret your Law playfully,
   That Ahmad, the Apostle, is different from God?
7. Sit for a while separate from Him,
   Remain for a while Godless.
   Verily, even association with the truth constitutes
   polytheism ;
   Thou shouldst sit in complete recognition within
   thy own self.
8. Kingship is easy, acquaint thyself with poverty ;
   Why should drop become a pearl when it can transform
   itself into an ocean?
9. Hands soiled with gold begin to stink,
   How (bad) would be the plight of soul soiled in the gold?

Day and night thou hearest of people's death ;
Thou hast also to die, how strange is this behaviour !

10. The more a traveller is unencumbered,
The less he feels worried and anxious in his journey.
Thou, too, art a traveller in this world,
Take this as certain, if thou art wakeful.
One's dissatisfaction corresponds to one's riches—
Heavier is the turban with a large number of folds.
Drive egoism away from you, for,
Like conceit and arrogance's load, it is also a burden.
So long as you live in this world, be independent :
Qadiri has forewarned you.

11. O man ! dost thou know thy own worth,
That thou art the treasure of the hidden secret?
Thy form (hands and feet) hath God's imprint on it,
Why dost thou not say that (the) hand of Allah is above thy hand?

12. Whosoever recognised this, carried the day,
He who lost himself, found Him.
He who sat at the foot of the wine jar,
Won over the Saqi, the wine and the cup.
And he who sought Him not within his own self,
Passed away, carrying his quest along with him.
And he who knew not this secret,
When turned to dust, carried his desire unfulfilled.
Qadiri found his Beloved within his own self :
Himself of good disposition, he won (the favour of) the Good.

Chapter 8

SELECTED QUATRAINS

English translation of some of the quatrains of Prince Dara Shikoh selected from his works is given below :

1. We have not seen an atom separate from the Sun,
   Every drop of water is the sea in itself.
   With what name should one call the Truth?—
   Every name that exists is one of God's names.
2. Those who visualise God in the hereafter,
   Thou shouldst know, first behold Him in this world.
   The vision of God is uniform in both the worlds—
   Every moment they behold Him in the open and in secret.
3. The rosary spoke to me in a strange tongue.
   It said, "Why dost thou make my head reel?
   Wert thou to attend (revolve) to thine own heart instead,
   Thou wouldst know the object underlying man's creation."
4. To revile me thou hast termed me an "infidel".
   I, too, consider thy talk as true,
   Disgrace (declivity) and glory (ascent) have become alike to me—
   My religion is that of the two and seventy sects (of Islam).
5. In silence and meditation consists the Unity of God :
   Discussion entails the departure of Unity.
6. To whatsoever object thou mayest turn thy face, He is in view :
   Art thou blind, for why dost thou assign Him to thyself?
   Since God hath said : "In whatever direction thou mayest turn,

It is incumbent on thee to turn thine eyes upon thine own self."

7. Although there is no shadow of God's essence,
Yet (the title of kind as) Shadow of God does not show anyone else.

8. O! thou, who seekest God everywhere,
Thou verily art God and not separate from Him.
Already in the midst of a boundless ocean,
Thy quest resembles the search of a drop for the ocean.

9. The Gnostic endows you with illumination—body and soul,
A barren thorny mound he transforms into a rose garden.
The Perfect leads you out of the erroneous Path—
A candle illuminates a thousand candles.

10. The air filled the clay-pot, from within and without,
Sound and noise virbrated from within it.
When the clay-pot gets broken the sound becomes the psychic sound—
Like the bubble which bursts and becomes the very ocean.

11. Pleasant though it is to sit ever in meditation,
Yet why should this limitation be ever indispensable to me:
Forgetfulness of God by men is ordained by God:
For me it is a torment to remember ever.

12. The water can never veil the face of ice,
Though a bubble might form an impression within the ice:
The Truth is like the ocean of reality, wherein abide both the worlds,
Like the water within the ice and the ice within the water.

13. None should evaluate me (by my sayings),
Nor should anyone take offence at what I have said.
Although the nightingale produces four young ones,
The first-born turns out to be a nightingale.

14. Dost thou wish to enter the circle of men of illumination?
Then cease talking and be in the "state";
By professing the Unity of God, thou canst not become a monotheist,
As the tongue cannot taste sugar by only uttering its name.

15. In certainty and for thy benefit I tell thee—
If thou art a man of the Path, accept it and turn not thy face away:
Attributes can never conceal the Essence.
How can the figure on water stand in the way of its being touched?

16. My life and existence, I have discarded,
Goodness and evil have become all alike to me:
Now I cannot utter my name or His name,
If I chose any name, He would be displeased with me.

17. I tell thee the secret of *Tawhid*, if thou wert to understand it aright,
Nowhere exists anything but God.
All you see or know other than Him
Is separate in name, but in essence one with God.

18. Though the Beloved may have a veil intervening,
His face appears most pleasant and beautiful.
Since thy spectacles are the veil on the face of the Beloved,
(Beware) that it may not raise a cloud of mist before thine eyes.

19. Like an ocean is the essence of the Supreme Self,
Like forms in water are all souls and objects.
The ocean, heaving and stirring within,
Transforms itself into drops, waves, and bubbles.

20. In what abundance may stupidity have gripped mankind
And heedlessness have overpowered them all:
Everyone who is occupied with anything,
Whether he realises it or not, is occupied with the Truth.

21. He realises the unity, who has no "state"

Even in the path of quest, this intuition is not great.
Happy is he who found Him within his own self—
He is omnipresent, no place is without Him.

22. What disavowals did Satan hurl at Adam?
Said Husain (Mansur Hallaj), "(I am) the Truth," and got the gallows.
Every prophet and saint, who suffered affliction and torments,
(It was) due to the vicious and ignominious conduct of the Mullas.

23. Every moment, the Gnostics are recipients of new Love,—
They are leaders in themselves, not those who follow others.
The lions would not partake of aught except what they have killed themselves :
The fox feeds upon the leavings of dry flesh.

24. The Dervish performs every task that is difficult,
With his breath he applies balm, which injures him.
When he attains union with God, he wields powers more potent,—
An unsheathed sword is more effective in its work.

25. In separation from thee, I have suffered pangs of anxiety,
In union with thee, I have lost my own consciousness:
Then happiness dawned upon my soul and became my lot,
Now shall I pass my days in peace, both in body and mind.

26. O Thou, from whose very name raineth Love!
And from the epistle and message of Thine raineth love!
Whosoever passeth by Thy street realises
Indeed that from the very door to the terrace of Thine (House) raineth Love.

Chapter 9

THE MAJMA-UL-BAHRAIN

Majma-ul-Bahrain means the mingling of two oceans. The author refers the two oceans to the two religions, Hinduism and Islam. In this book the prince has made an attempt to reconcile the doctrines of the two religions, showing the similarity between them. The following verse of the prince given in the *Majma-ul-Bahrain* identifies his motive : "Islam and infidelity are both galloping on the way towards Him, exclaiming : 'He is one and none shares His sovereignty.'"

At another place he says, "The book is a collection of the truth and wisdom of two truth-knowing groups." In this book, the prince has asserted that there is no fundamental difference between Hinduism and Islam. He writes that "after knowing the truth of truths and secrets of religions and after association with and ascertaining from the doctors and divines of Hindu religion, who had attained mastery in the religious practices, I have come to the conclusion that there is no difference except verbal in seeking the truth in the two religions." He further says, "After long associations and discussions with the perfect divines of Indian religion, I compiled the views of the two parties and having brought together the points—a knowledge of which is absolutely essential and useful for the seekers of the truth—I have compiled a tract and entitled it *Majma-ul-Bahrain* (the mingling of the two oceans). It is a collection of the truth and wisdom of the truth-knowing groups."

The contents of the book translated by B.J. Hasrat are as follows :

(1) On the Elements (*Anasir*).

(2) On Senses (*Hawas*).

(3) On the Devotional Exercises (*Ashghal*).

(4) On the attributes of God, the Most High (*Sifati-i-Allah Taala*).
(5) On the soul (*Ruh*).
(6) On the Air (*Bad*).
(7) On the Four Words (*Awalim-i-Arab'a*).
(8) On Sound (*Awaz*).
(9) On Light (*Nur*).
(10) On the Vision of God (*Ruyat*).
(11) On the names of God, the Most High (*Asama-i-Allah Taala*).
(12) On Apostleship and Saintship (*Nubuwwat wa Wilayat*).
(13) On Brahmanda.
(14) On the Directions (*Jihat*).
(15) On the Skies (*Asmanha*).
(16) On the Earth (*Zamin*).
(17) On the Divisions of the Earth (*Qismat-i-Zamin*).
(18) On the *Barzakh*.
(19) On the Ressurrection (*Qiyamat*).
(20) On the *Mukti* (*Salvation*).
(21) On Day and Night (*Ruz wa Shab*).
(22) On the Infinity of the Cycles (*Banihayati-i-Adwar*).

Historians believe that it was this book which brought about the execution of the prince. The orthodox courtiers blamed him for free thinking and heretical notions, and started believing that the prince had inclination towards the institutions and religion of the Hindus. The contemporary European travellers like Bernier and Manucci hold the view that this book and other works of the prince indicated his liberal outlook on religious matters which procured a decree from the legal advisers of Aurangzeb that Dara had apostatised from Islamic law and allied himself with infidelity.

But was it infidelity on the part of the prince or had he struck an original line of investigation? Was it heresy or views of a seeker of truth or the findings of a mystic philosopher? Undoubtedly, it was the work of a genius and great thinker. But, unfortunately, he was the crown prince, the crown prince of the subcontinent, whose every activity was watched and whose every

spoken or written word would affect the minds of millions. He could not afford to present the religion in a different light. Because the people had not yet forgotten the new religion (Din-i-Ilahi) which his grandfather, Emperor Akbar, had tried to impose upon them. And particularly the orthodox Muslim nobles and courtiers had taken it as a potential danger and threat to the cause of Islam in the sub-continent. Therefore this book played an important role in deciding the fate of the prince.



Prince Dara Shikoh riding along with Emperor Shah Jahan on a Hunting Expedition.



Gulsafa, Mistress of Prince Dara Shikoh,



A Painting from Prince Dara Shikoh's Album



A Painting from Prince Dara Shikoh's Album

Chapter 10

THE ARTIST

The descendants of Timur were not mere warriors but were scholars, poets and possessed a high aesthetic sense. Prominent calligraphists and famous contemporary painters always remained in employment and constituted part of the royal courts. They were given *mansab* and were highly paid. Emperor Akbar introduced the Persian style of painting. This finally resulted in the realm of fine arts. There were more than one hundred calligraphers and painters in his employment.

In the days of Akbar calligraphy had become an art rather than a qualification of personal distinction. The skilled court calligraphists would write all the orders and letters dictated by the Emperor to the governors of the provinces and foreign rulers. The art of miniature painting was also patronised by Emperor Akbar. This tradition was kept alive by his descendants and talcnted artists made an important group of Mughal courts till the reign of Aurangzeb.

The art of painting and calligraphy reached its Zenith during the reign of Emperor Shah Jehan. A replica of this period is preserved in the India Office Library. This is a collection of Prince Dara Shikoh. One may call it an album of the prince.

Prince Dara Shikoh, besides being a scholar, was an artist and a patron of art. He was an outstanding calligraphist. By virtue of his position he could study this art under renowned calligraphists like Aqa Abdul Rashid Dailami. Aqa Abdul Rashid was the chief calligraphist of Shah Jehan's court, and nobody in the country could compete with him. Some specimens preserved in certain Oriental libraries show that he could write both in *Naskh* and *Nastaliq* with proficiency. Some of the books written by the

prince are still preserved in various libraries and museums of the sub-continent. For instance, the Quran written on a deer skin is kept in Aziz Bagh Library in Hyderabad Deccan. A Panjsura written in *Naskh* in gold is preserved in Buhar library, Calcutta. A book (*Dah Pand-i-Arastu*) written in *Nastaliq* is lying in the Victoria Memorial Hall, Calcutta. A pamphlet *Risala-i-Hikmat-i-Arastu* copied by him is preserved in the Asifiya Library, Hyderabad Deccan. *Sharh-i-Diwan-i-Hafiz* is also available in the Asifiya Library. An autograph on the precious album which the prince presented to his beloved wife, Princess Nadira Begum, and many other handwritten documents of the prince show that he had acquired extraordinary ability in penmanship.

The prince could make beautiful miniature portraits. He was a good judge of the pictorial art of the Mughals and collected excellent paintings and compiled them in an album. This album he presented to his wife Nadira Bano. It is now lying in the India Office. This is also called *Muraqqa* of Prince Dara Shikoh. It has seventy-nine folios besides many decorated fly leaves and forty miniatures. It contains excellent specimens of calligraphic and pictorial art, beginning from Akbar's time till the end of Shah Jehan's. The collection of these portraits shows his high artistic taste and the labour he did to compile such a rare collection of works of the Indo-Persian art.

Chapter 11

ELEPHANT FIGHT

Emperor Shah Jehan had four sons, Dara Shikoh, Shuja, Aurangzeb and Murad Bakhsh, all born from the same mother, Arjumand Bano Begum, the Queen surnamed Mumtaz Mahal or Taj Mahal. All the four sons got education worthy of a Mughal prince. They were all very energetic and brave, but how much they loved and trusted each other in childhood cannot be estimated with certainty. However, an incident throws some light on the relation of the two princes (Dara Shikoh and Aurangzeb) when they were still young.

The incident occurred on 28 May 1633. Emperor Shah Jehan had gone to witness an elephant fight on the bank of Jumna, near the Agra Fort. The two elephants taking part in the duel were Sudhaker and suret Sunder. As the fight began the two elephants ran for some distance and grappled with each other. The Emperor was witnessing the fight from his horse accompanied by the four princes. Aurangzeb edged his way forward, to have a closer look at the animals. He was then fourteen years old. After a short while, the elephants let go their grip and withdrew a little. Sudhaker, whose spirit was fully roused, leaving his opponent, turned aside and charged Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb calmly faced the coming danger, kept his horse from turning back and threw his spear at the brute's head. The situation had taken a worst turn, panic spread in the crowd, men stumbled on one another while fleeing. The courtiers and attendants ran about shouting. Fire was ignited to distract the elephant, but in vain. The elephant dashed against Aurangzeb's horse and with a sweep of its long tusks threw both the horse and the rider on the ground. No sooner did his horse fall, Aurangzeb gathered himself, drew his

sword and faced the elephant. At that time Shuja forced his way through the crowd and smoke, charged the elephant and struck him with his spear. He was also thrown down by the raging beast. Then came Raja Jai Singh charging, and he managed to inflict a deep wound on the animal. Shah Jehan was shouting at his guard to rescue the prince. Just then an unexpected thing happened. The other elephant, Suret Sunder, returned to revive the combat. But Sudhaker, already wounded and harassed and having no courage to face its opponent, fled from the field, pursued by Sudhaker.

This encounter lasted not more than a few minutes. Dara Shikoh did not come to Aurangzeb's aid and kept riding away by the side of his father. This roused a lasting enmity in the mind of Aurangzeb against Dara Shikoh. Next day Shah Jehan conferred on Aurangzeb the title of *Bahadur* or Hero and covered him with presents. When his father lovingly chid him for his rash courage, he replied, "If the fight had ended fatally for me it would not have been a matter of shame. Death drops the curtain even on Emperors ; it is not dishonour. The shame lay in what my brother did."

Another such incident is revealed when Prince Dara invited his father and brothers to show them a newly constructed underground apartment of his mansion near the river Jumna. The room had only one door. Dara led the party inside, but Aurangzeb, instead of entering, sat outside near the door. Even the Emperor's command did not make him go in. This disobedience cost him his rank and he was forbidden to visit the court. Nine tense months passed. One day his sister Jehanara persuaded him to tell the reason for his disobedience. He said, "There was only one door to that room. I feared that Dara might lock the door and kill his father and brothers. Therefore I sat outside the door to keep watch." Jehanara intimated this to her father, who appreciating the precaution taken by Aurangzeb restored him to honour. That clearly shows how much hatred and mistrust these two brothers had developed for each other.

Chapter 12

SERIOUS RIVALRY

The princes had come of age, to hold high ranks and to administer vast territories of the Mughal Empire. A serious rivalry between Aurangzeb and Dara Shikoh had already started. The ill-feeling between the two was so bitter and had continued bitterer for so many years past that it was the talk of the whole Empire. Peace had been maintained between them only by keeping Aurangzeb far away from the court. Everyone foreboded that the succession to Shah Jehan would be disputed and that a universal and complicated civil war would deluge all parts of India with blood.

Dara had the upper hand, because he generally stayed at the court and was a great favourite of his father. He had very badly handicaped Aurangzeb during his campaigns against the King of Bijapur and Golconda and constantly incited his father against him. Aurangzeb suffered very badly as a result of palace intrigues hatched by Dara Shikoh, Jehanara and their court supporters.

Besides this, Aurangzeb's other grudge against Dara was his religious views. Dara's views in religious matters militated against his political interest, as some of orthodox Sunni Muslims of Aurangzeb's way of thinking and even his brothers regarded him as a heretic.

In actual fact, Dara had taken after his grandfather Akbar. In his love for knowledge he had studied the Talmud and the New Testament, the writings of the Muslim Sufis and the Hindu Vedanta. The easy government of Allahabad had assisted his natural inclination and with the help of a band of Pandits he had rendered the Upanishads into Persian. He was also doing research in finding a solution to religious conflicts by combining the vital points of all the great religions. The title of *Majma-ul-Bahrain*

(the mingling of two oceans) which he gave to another work as well as his prefatory remarks proves that his aim was to find a meeting point for Hinduism and Islam. He had compiled a biography of Muslim saints and was a disciple of the Muslim saint, Mian Mir.

Undoubtedly, he was a great scholar, a spiritual preceptor, very kind-hearted and extremely liberal. His enthronement might have revived the days of Akbar the Great, but his religious philosophy and practice had created enemies amongst his own kinsmen and courtiers. The following of his practices attracted sharp criticism from orthodox Sunni nobles, and Aurangzeb did not take them with a light heart:

(1) Discussing philosophy of religions openly with Brahmans, Yogis, Sannyasis, considering them perfect spiritual guides and "knowers of God." Regarding the Veda as a divine book and spending his days in translating and studying it.

(2) Wearing rings and jewels inscribed with the word "Prabhu" (lord) in Hindi letters.

(3) Discarding prayers, the fasts during the month of Ramazan and other canonical ceremonies of Islam.

(4) Special favourtism to Hindu Rajputs whom he considered to be his saviours during the time of need.

Dara's status and influence at the court was supreme; being heir to the throne he came only next to the Emperor. Besides being the most beloved son of the Emperor, he was also the eldest of four brothers and Shah Jehan had given clear indications that he wished to bequeathe the crown to him. In order to train him in the administration of the Empire and to smooth the transfer of the supreme authority to him, the Emperor had kept Dara by his side for many years. The viceroyalty of rich and long settled provinces like Allahabad, the Punjab and Multan had been conferred on him, but he was allowed to stay at his father's court and govern them by deputies.

At the same time the Emperor bestowed on him rank and privileges which raised him to an utmost royal position midway

Chapter 7

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"So greatly is my heart associated with infidelity, that many a time,
When I took it to Mecca, it returned a Brahman."

The Emperor was very much annoyed on hearing the verse, but Afzal Khan, a courtier, pacified him by narrating the following verse of Sadi :

"Christ's ass, even if it were to go on pilgrimage to Mecca

An ass it would remain on its return."

Some selected quatrains and verses from the *Diwan* of Dara Shikoh translated into English are given below :

1. Though I do not think myself separate from Him,
   Yet I do not consider myself God ;
   Whatever relation the drop bears to the Ocean,
   That I hold true in my belief and nothing beyond.
2. Look where you can, All is He,
   God's face is ever face to face.
3. Turn to none except God
   The rosary and sacred thread are means to an end
   (connecting link).
4. Whatever thou beholdest except Him, is the object of the
   fancy.
   Things other than He have their existence like a mirage.
   The existence of God is like a boundless ocean—
   Men are like forms and waves in its water.
5. Paradise is there where no Mulla abides,
   Where there is no argument and tumult with him.
   May the world become free from the noise of the Mulla !
   May no one pay heed to his Fatwas !
   In the city where a Mulla resides,
   No wise man is ever found.
6. How long would you interpret your Law playfully,
   That Ahmad, the Apostle, is different from God?
7. Sit for a while separate from Him,
   Remain for a while Godless.
   Verily, even association with the truth constitutes
   polytheism ;
   Thou shouldst sit in complete recognition within
   thy own self.
8. Kingship is easy, acquaint thyself with poverty ;
   Why should drop become a pearl when it can transform
   itself into an ocean?
9. Hands soiled with gold begin to stink,
   How (bad) would be the plight of soul soiled in the gold?

Day and night thou hearest of people's death ;
Thou hast also to die, how strange is this behaviour !

10. The more a traveller is unencumbered,
The less he feels worried and anxious in his journey.
Thou, too, art a traveller in this world,
Take this as certain, if thou art wakeful.
One's dissatisfaction corresponds to one's riches—
Heavier is the turban with a large number of folds.
Drive egoism away from you, for,
Like conceit and arrogance's load, it is also a burden.
So long as you live in this world, be independent :
Qadiri has forewarned you.

11. O man ! dost thou know thy own worth,
That thou art the treasure of the hidden secret ?
Thy form (hands and feet) hath God's imprint on it,
Why dost thou not say that (the) hand of Allah is above
thy hand ?

12. Whosoever recognised this, carried the day,
He who lost himself, found Him.
He who sat at the foot of the wine jar,
Won over the Saqi, the wine and the cup.
And he who sought Him not within his own self,
Passed away, carrying his quest along with him.
And he who knew not this secret,
When turned to dust, carried his desire unfulfilled.
Qadiri found his Beloved within his own self :
Himself of good disposition, he won (the favour of) the
Good.

Chapter 8

SELECTED QUATRAINS

English translation of some of the quatrains of Prince Dara Shikoh selected from his works is given below :

1. We have not seen an atom separate from the Sun,
   Every drop of water is the sea in itself.
   With what name should one call the Truth?—
   Every name that exists is one of God's names.
2. Those who visualise God in the hereafter,
   Thou shouldst know, first behold Him in this world.
   The vision of God is uniform in both the worlds—
   Every moment they behold Him in the open and in secret.
3. The rosary spoke to me in a strange tongue.
   It said, "Why dost thou make my head reel?
   Wert thou to attend (revolve) to thine own heart instead,
   Thou wouldst know the object underlying man's creation."
4. To revile me thou hast termed me an "infidel".
   I, too, consider thy talk as true,
   Disgrace (declivity) and glory (ascent) have become alike to me—
   My religion is that of the two and seventy sects (of Islam).
5. In silence and meditation consists the Unity of God :
   Discussion entails the departure of Unity.
6. To whatsoever object thou mayest turn thy face, He is in view :
   Art thou blind, for why dost thou assign Him to thyself?
   Since God hath said : "In whatever direction thou mayest turn,

It is incumbent on thee to turn thine eyes upon thine own self."

7. Although there is no shadow of God's essence,
Yet (the title of kind as) Shadow of God does not show anyone else.

8. O! thou, who seekest God everywhere,
Thou verily art God and not separate from Him.
Already in the midst of a boundless ocean,
Thy quest resembles the search of a drop for the ocean.

9. The Gnostic endows you with illumination—body and soul,
A barren thorny mound he transforms into a rose garden.
The Perfect leads you out of the erroneous Path—
A candle illuminates a thousand candles.

10. The air filled the clay-pot, from within and without,
Sound and noise virbrated from within it.
When the clay-pot gets broken the sound becomes the psychic sound—
Like the bubble which bursts and becomes the very ocean.

11. Pleasant though it is to sit ever in meditation,
Yet why should this limitation be ever indispensable to me:
Forgetfulness of God by men is ordained by God:
For me it is a torment to remember ever.

12. The water can never veil the face of ice,
Though a bubble might form an impression within the ice:
The Truth is like the ocean of reality, wherein abide both the worlds,
Like the water within the ice and the ice within the water.

13. None should evaluate me (by my sayings),
Nor should anyone take offence at what I have said.
Although the nightingale produces four young ones,
The first-born turns out to be a nightingale.

14. Dost thou wish to enter the circle of men of illumination?
Then cease talking and be in the "state";
By professing the Unity of God, thou canst not become a monotheist,
As the tongue cannot taste sugar by only uttering its name.

15. In certainty and for thy benefit I tell thee—
If thou art a man of the Path, accept it and turn not thy face away:
Attributes can never conceal the Essence.
How can the figure on water stand in the way of its being touched?

16. My life and existence, I have discarded,
Goodness and evil have become all alike to me:
Now I cannot utter my name or His name,
If I chose any name, He would be displeased with me.

17. I tell thee the secret of *Tawhid*, if thou wert to understand it aright,
Nowhere exists anything but God.
All you see or know other than Him
Is separate in name, but in essence one with God.

18. Though the Beloved may have a veil intervening,
His face appears most pleasant and beautiful.
Since thy spectacles are the veil on the face of the Beloved,
(Beware) that it may not raise a cloud of mist before thine eyes.

19. Like an ocean is the essence of the Supreme Self,
Like forms in water are all souls and objects.
The ocean, heaving and stirring within,
Transforms itself into drops, waves, and bubbles.

20. In what abundance may stupidity have gripped mankind
And heedlessness have overpowered them all:
Everyone who is occupied with anything,
Whether he realises it or not, is occupied with the Truth.

21. He realises the unity, who has no "state"

Even in the path of quest, this intuition is not great.
Happy is he who found Him within his own self—
He is omnipresent, no place is without Him.

22. What disavowals did Satan hurl at Adam?
Said Husain (Mansur Hallaj), "(I am) the Truth," and got the gallows.
Every prophet and saint, who suffered affliction and torments,
(It was) due to the vicious and ignominious conduct of the Mullas.

23. Every moment, the Gnostics are recipients of new Love,—
They are leaders in themselves, not those who follow others.
The lions would not partake of aught except what they have killed themselves :
The fox feeds upon the leavings of dry flesh.

24. The Dervish performs every task that is difficult,
With his breath he applies balm, which injures him.
When he attains union with God, he wields powers more potent,—
An unsheathed sword is more effective in its work.

25. In separation from thee, I have suffered pangs of anxiety,
In union with thee, I have lost my own consciousness:
Then happiness dawned upon my soul and became my lot,
Now shall I pass my days in peace, both in body and mind.

26. O Thou, from whose very name raineth Love!
And from the epistle and message of Thine raineth love!
Whosoever passeth by Thy street realises
Indeed that from the very door to the terrace of Thine (House) raineth Love.

Chapter 9

THE MAJMA-UL-BAHRAIN

Majma-ul-Bahrain means the mingling of two oceans. The author refers the two oceans to the two religions, Hinduism and Islam. In this book the prince has made an attempt to reconcile the doctrines of the two religions, showing the similarity between them. The following verse of the prince given in the *Majma-ul-Bahrain* identifies his motive : "Islam and infidelity are both galloping on the way towards Him, exclaiming : 'He is one and none shares His sovereignty.' "

At another place he says, "The book is a collection of the truth and wisdom of two truth-knowing groups." In this book, the prince has asserted that there is no fundamental difference between Hinduism and Islam. He writes that "after knowing the truth of truths and secrets of religions and after association with and ascertaining from the doctors and divines of Hindu religion, who had attained mastery in the religious practices, I have come to the conclusion that there is no difference except verbal in seeking the truth in the two religions." He further says, "After long associations and discussions with the perfect divines of Indian religion, I compiled the views of the two parties and having brought together the points—a knowledge of which is absolutely essential and useful for the seekers of the truth—I have compiled a tract and entitled it *Majma-ul-Bahrain* (the mingling of the two oceans). It is a collection of the truth and wisdom of the truth-knowing groups."

The contents of the book translated by B.J. Hasrat are as follows :

(1) On the Elements (*Anasir*).

(2) On Senses (*Hawas*).

(3) On the Devotional Exercises (*Ashghal*).

(4) On the attributes of God, the Most High (*Sifati-i-Allah Taala*).
(5) On the soul (*Ruh*).
(6) On the Air (*Bad*).
(7) On the Four Words (*Awalim-i-Arab'a*).
(8) On Sound (*Awaz*).
(9) On Light (*Nur*).
(10) On the Vision of God (*Ruyat*).
(11) On the names of God, the Most High (*Asama-i-Allah Taala*).
(12) On Apostleship and Saintship (*Nubuwwat wa Wilayat*).
(13) On Brahmanda.
(14) On the Directions (*Jihat*).
(15) On the Skies (*Asmanha*).
(16) On the Earth (*Zamin*).
(17) On the Divisions of the Earth (*Qismat-i-Zamin*).
(18) On the *Barzakh.*
(19) On the Ressurrection (*Qiyamat*).
(20) On the *Mukti (Salvation)*.
(21) On Day and Night (*Ruz wa Shab*).
(22) On the Infinity of the Cycles (*Banihayati-i-Adwar*).

Historians believe that it was this book which brought about the execution of the prince. The orthodox courtiers blamed him for free thinking and heretical notions, and started believing that the prince had inclination towards the institutions and religion of the Hindus. The contemporary European travellers like Bernier and Manucci hold the view that this book and other works of the prince indicated his liberal outlook on religious matters which procured a decree from the legal advisers of Aurangzeb that Dara had apostatised from Islamic law and allied himself with infidelity.

But was it infidelity on the part of the prince or had he struck an original line of investigation? Was it heresy or views of a seeker of truth or the findings of a mystic philosopher? Undoubtedly, it was the work of a genius and great thinker. But, unfortunately, he was the crown prince, the crown prince of the subcontinent, whose every activity was watched and whose every

spoken or written word would affect the minds of millions. He could not afford to present the religion in a different light. Because the people had not yet forgotten the new religion (Din-i-Ilahi) which his grandfather, Emperor Akbar, had tried to impose upon them. And particularly the orthodox Muslim nobles and courtiers had taken it as a potential danger and threat to the cause of Islam in the sub-continent. Therefore this book played an important role in deciding the fate of the prince.



Prince Dara Shikoh riding along with Emperor Shah Jahan on a Hunting Expedition.



Gulsafa, Mistress of Prince Dara Shikoh,



A Painting from Prince Dara Shikoh's Album



A Painting from Prince Dara Shikoh's Album

Chapter 10

THE ARTIST

The descendants of Timur were not mere warriors but were scholars, poets and possessed a high aesthetic sense. Prominent calligraphists and famous contemporary painters always remained in employment and constituted part of the royal courts. They were given *mansab* and were highly paid. Emperor Akbar introduced the Persian style of painting. This finally resulted in the realm of fine arts. There were more than one hundred calligraphers and painters in his employment.

In the days of Akbar calligraphy had become an art rather than a qualification of personal distinction. The skilled court calligraphists would write all the orders and letters dictated by the Emperor to the governors of the provinces and foreign rulers. The art of miniature painting was also patronised by Emperor Akbar. This tradition was kept alive by his descendants and talcnted artists made an important group of Mughal courts till the reign of Aurangzeb.

The art of painting and calligraphy reached its Zenith during the reign of Emperor Shah Jehan. A replica of this period is preserved in the India Office Library. This is a collection of Prince Dara Shikoh. One may call it an album of the prince.

Prince Dara Shikoh, besides being a scholar, was an artist and a patron of art. He was an outstanding calligraphist. By virtue of his position he could study this art under renowned calligraphists like Aqa Abdul Rashid Dailami. Aqa Abdul Rashid was the chief calligraphist of Shah Jehan's court, and nobody in the country could compete with him. Some specimens preserved in certain Oriental libraries show that he could write both in *Naskh* and *Nastaliq* with proficiency. Some of the books written by the

prince are still preserved in various libraries and museums of the sub-continent. For instance, the Quran written on a deer skin is kept in Aziz Bagh Library in Hyderabad Deccan. A Panjsura written in *Naskh* in gold is preserved in Buhar library, Calcutta. A book (*Dah Pand-i-Arastu*) written in *Nastaliq* is lying in the Victoria Memorial Hall, Calcutta. A pamphlet *Risala-i-Hikmat-i-Arastu* copied by him is preserved in the Asifiya Library, Hyderabad Deccan. *Sharh-i-Diwan-i-Hafiz* is also available in the Asifiya Library. An autograph on the precious album which the prince presented to his beloved wife, Princess Nadira Begum, and many other handwritten documents of the prince show that he had acquired extraordinary ability in penmanship.

The prince could make beautiful miniature portraits. He was a good judge of the pictorial art of the Mughals and collected excellent paintings and compiled them in an album. This album he presented to his wife Nadira Bano. It is now lying in the India Office. This is also called *Muraqqa* of Prince Dara Shikoh. It has seventy-nine folios besides many decorated fly leaves and forty miniatures. It contains excellent specimens of calligraphic and pictorial art, beginning from Akbar's time till the end of Shah Jehan's. The collection of these portraits shows his high artistic taste and the labour he did to compile such a rare collection of works of the Indo-Persian art.

Chapter 11

ELEPHANT FIGHT

Emperor Shah Jehan had four sons, Dara Shikoh, Shuja, Aurangzeb and Murad Bakhsh, all born from the same mother, Arjumand Bano Begum, the Queen surnamed Mumtaz Mahal or Taj Mahal. All the four sons got education worthy of a Mughal prince. They were all very energetic and brave, but how much they loved and trusted each other in childhood cannot be estimated with certainty. However, an incident throws some light on the relation of the two princes (Dara Shikoh and Aurangzeb) when they were still young.

The incident occurred on 28 May 1633. Emperor Shah Jehan had gone to witness an elephant fight on the bank of Jumna, near the Agra Fort. The two elephants taking part in the duel were Sudhaker and suret Sunder. As the fight began the two elephants ran for some distance and grappled with each other. The Emperor was witnessing the fight from his horse accompanied by the four princes. Aurangzeb edged his way forward, to have a closer look at the animals. He was then fourteen years old. After a short while, the elephants let go their grip and withdrew a little. Sudhaker, whose spirit was fully roused, leaving his opponent, turned aside and charged Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb calmly faced the coming danger, kept his horse from turning back and threw his spear at the brute's head. The situation had taken a worst turn, panic spread in the crowd, men stumbled on one another while fleeing. The courtiers and attendants ran about shouting. Fire was ignited to distract the elephant, but in vain. The elephant dashed against Aurangzeb's horse and with a sweep of its long tusks threw both the horse and the rider on the ground. No sooner did his horse fall, Aurangzeb gathered himself, drew his

sword and faced the elephant. At that time Shuja forced his way through the crowd and smoke, charged the elephant and struck him with his spear. He was also thrown down by the raging beast. Then came Raja Jai Singh charging, and he managed to inflict a deep wound on the animal. Shah Jehan was shouting at his guard to rescue the prince. Just then an unexpected thing happened. The other elephant, Suret Sunder, returned to revive the combat. But Sudhaker, already wounded and harassed and having no courage to face its opponent, fled from the field, pursued by Sudhaker.

This encounter lasted not more than a few minutes. Dara Shikoh did not come to Aurangzeb's aid and kept riding away by the side of his father. This roused a lasting enmity in the mind of Aurangzeb against Dara Shikoh. Next day Shah Jehan conferred on Aurangzeb the title of *Bahadur* or Hero and covered him with presents. When his father lovingly chid him for his rash courage, he replied, "If the fight had ended fatally for me it would not have been a matter of shame. Death drops the curtain even on Emperors ; it is not dishonour. The shame lay in what my brother did."

Another such incident is revealed when Prince Dara invited his father and brothers to show them a newly constructed underground apartment of his mansion near the river Jumna. The room had only one door. Dara led the party inside, but Aurangzeb, instead of entering, sat outside near the door. Even the Emperor's command did not make him go in. This disobedience cost him his rank and he was forbidden to visit the court. Nine tense months passed. One day his sister Jehanara persuaded him to tell the reason for his disobedience. He said, "There was only one door to that room. I feared that Dara might lock the door and kill his father and brothers. Therefore I sat outside the door to keep watch." Jehanara intimated this to her father, who appreciating the precaution taken by Aurangzeb restored him to honour That clearly shows how much hatred and mistrust these two brothers had developed for each other.

Chapter 12

SERIOUS RIVALRY

The princes had come of age, to hold high ranks and to administer vast territories of the Mughal Empire. A serious rivalry between Aurangzeb and Dara Shikoh had already started. The ill-feeling between the two was so bitter and had continued bitterer for so many years past that it was the talk of the whole Empire. Peace had been maintained between them only by keeping Aurangzeb far away from the court. Everyone foreboded that the succession to Shah Jehan would be disputed and that a universal and complicated civil war would deluge all parts of India with blood.

Dara had the upper hand, because he generally stayed at the court and was a great favourite of his father. He had very badly handicaped Aurangzeb during his campaigns against the King of Bijapur and Golconda and constantly incited his father against him. Aurangzeb suffered very badly as a result of palace intrigues hatched by Dara Shikoh, Jehanara and their court supporters.

Besides this, Aurangzeb's other grudge against Dara was his religious views. Dara's views in religious matters militated against his political interest, as some of orthodox Sunni Muslims of Aurangzeb's way of thinking and even his brothers regarded him as a heretic.

In actual fact, Dara had taken after his grandfather Akbar. In his love for knowledge he had studied the Talmud and the New Testament, the writings of the Muslim Sufis and the Hindu Vedanta. The easy government of Allahabad had assisted his natural inclination and with the help of a band of Pandits he had rendered the Upanishads into Persian. He was also doing research in finding a solution to religious conflicts by combining the vital points of all the great religions. The title of *Majma-ul-Bahrain*

(the mingling of two oceans) which he gave to another work as well as his prefatory remarks proves that his aim was to find a meeting point for Hinduism and Islam. He had compiled a biography of Muslim saints and was a disciple of the Muslim saint, Mian Mir.

Undoubtedly, he was a great scholar, a spiritual preceptor, very kind-hearted and extremely liberal. His enthronement might have revived the days of Akbar the Great, but his religious philosophy and practice had created enemies amongst his own kinsmen and courtiers. The following of his practices attracted sharp criticism from orthodox Sunni nobles, and Aurangzeb did not take them with a light heart:

(1) Discussing philosophy of religions openly with Brahmans, Yogis, Sannyasis, considering them perfect spiritual guides and "knowers of God." Regarding the Veda as a divine book and spending his days in translating and studying it.

(2) Wearing rings and jewels inscribed with the word "Prabhu" (lord) in Hindi letters.

(3) Discarding prayers, the fasts during the month of Ramazan and other canonical ceremonies of Islam.

(4) Special favourtism to Hindu Rajputs whom he considered to be his saviours during the time of need.

Dara's status and influence at the court was supreme; being heir to the throne he came only next to the Emperor. Besides being the most beloved son of the Emperor, he was also the eldest of four brothers and Shah Jehan had given clear indications that he wished to bequeathe the crown to him. In order to train him in the administration of the Empire and to smooth the transfer of the supreme authority to him, the Emperor had kept Dara by his side for many years. The viceroyalty of rich and long settled provinces like Allahabad, the Punjab and Multan had been conferred on him, but he was allowed to stay at his father's court and govern them by deputies.

At the same time the Emperor bestowed on him rank and privileges which raised him to an utmost royal position midway

between the Emperor and other princes. Dara now enjoyed the high title of Shah-i-Buland Iqbal (king of lofty fortune), the unprecedented rank of a commander of forty thousand horse, and an income which many a king envied.

When he attended the court he was allowed to sit near the Emperor on a gold chair, only a little lower than the throne. Dara's sons were raised to military ranks as high as those of the Emperor's younger sons, and his officers were frequently ennobled by the Emperor.

Dependent kings, tributary princes, offenders under the imperial wrath, aspirants to office or title, all bought or begged Dara's mediation before they could approach the Emperor. Government officials and new recipients of titles, after having had audience of the Emperor, were sent by him to pay their respects to the Crown Prince. Much of the administration was latterly conducted at Dara's direction in the Emperor's presence or even Dara alone with permission to use the Emperor's name and seal. In short, eveything was done to make the public familiar with the idea that he was their future sovereign.

Never had such pomp and power been enjoyed and exercised in the past in India by any prince during the lifetime of his father. And never did any prince of the royal house wield so much influence over the minds of public as Dara did ; this was because he was of a charitable disposition, very kind-hearted and extremely generous.

On the other hand, Aurangzeb by the time he was thirteen achieved proficiency as an army general under his father's fighting men such as Ali Mardan, Jai Singh and Sad Allah, proved himself a stoic under untold hardships and of such coolness and "incomparable courage" that he would dismount for prayers in the midst of a battle and prostrate himself before God. In the thick of battle near Kandhar, when the Uzbeg king saw Prince Aurangzeb saying prayers, cried out, "To fight with such man is self-destruction." The king left the battlefield with his troops without fighting any more. While Dara was kept at the court, Aurangzeb was constantly engaged in dangerous expeditions. It is not understood why especially he was always chosen to undertake such dangerous and strenuous tasks.

Chapter 13

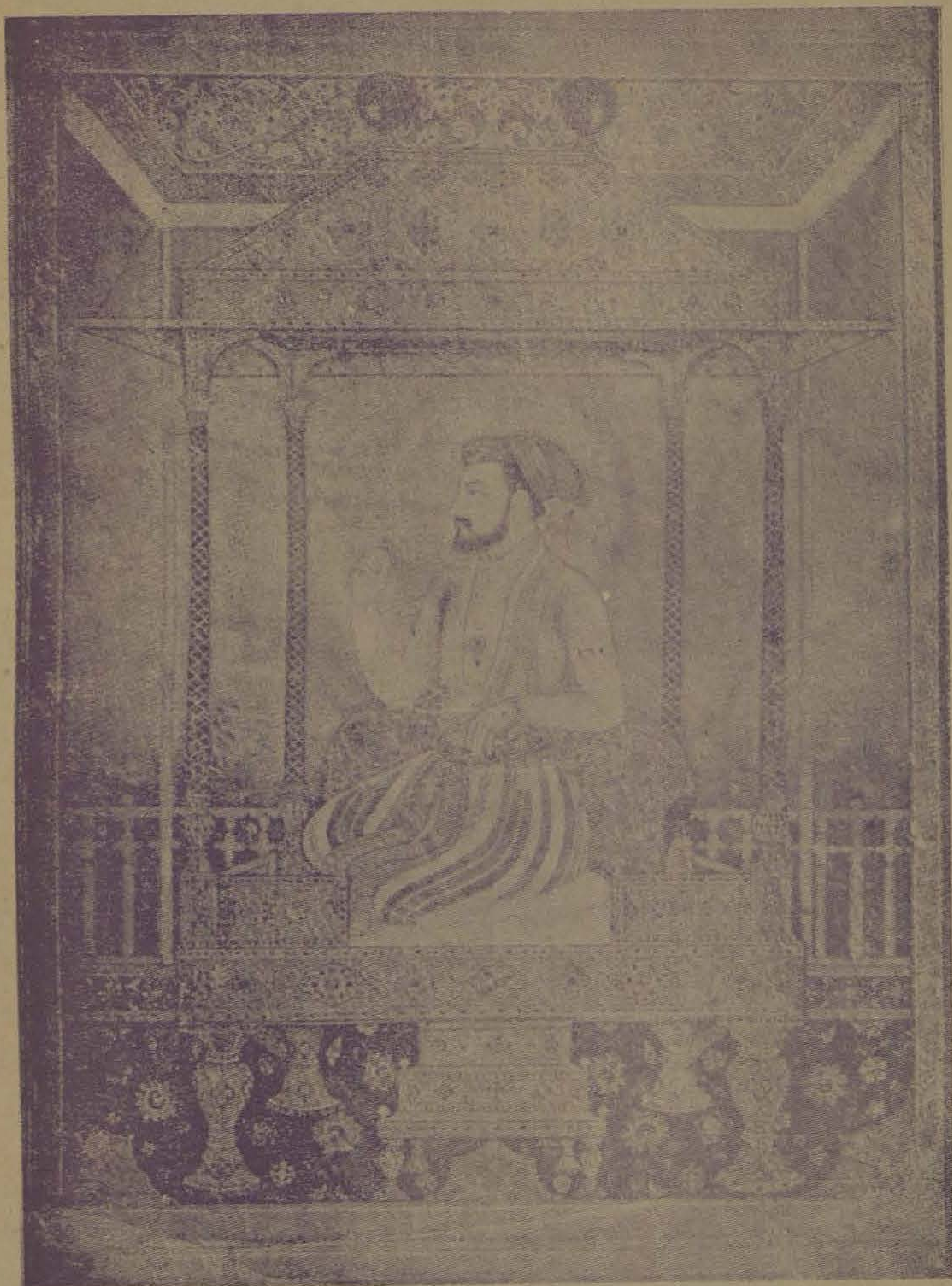
SHAH JEHAN'S ILLNESS

In September 1657, while at Dehli, Shah Jehan suddenly fell ill of "stranguary and constipation". For one week the royal physicians toiled in vain. The malady went on increasing. The daily Durbar was stopped, the Emperor even ceased to show himself to the public from the "Jharoka" every morning and the courtiers were denied access to the sick bed. A rumour spread that the Emperor had died. It filtered to the various parts of the Empire. After a few weeks, on the advice of physicians the Emperor left for Agra. During the period of illness Dara constantly remained by his bed-side, and he took care that nobody else visited the sick chamber, of course with the exception of three or four officers of the highest trust and the court physicians. Dara tended and nursed his father beyond the utmost limit of possibility.

During the period of Shah Jehan's illness, all urgent orders were issued by Dara. He exercised supreme authority and transacted public affairs at his own will, as his father's agent. On recovery Shah Jehan heaped on Dara, besides jewellery, promotions and rewards worth more than one crore of rupees, in recognition of his tender nursing during the Emperor's illness. Dara's rank was raised to that of a commander of sixty thousand horse and his two eldest sons were promoted as commanders of 15,000 and 10,000 troops, respectively.

During the period of the King's illness the following events gave rise to certain mishaps in the whole of the Mughal Empire:

1. The rumour of the King's death spread like wild fire and Dara's strict measures on restricting access to the Emperor went



Emperor Shah Jahan, father of prince Dara Shikoh on Peacock Throne.

far in confirming it. Even the court agents of Shuja, Aurangzeb and Murad were not certain as to what had happened to the King.

2. Anticipating his father's death, Dara imposed a strict censorship on the incoming and outgoing mail of his brothers' provinces. All probable routes and ferries were guarded by soldiers of the imperial army. This act on the part of the crown prince gave rise to suspicions which already existed in the minds of his brothers.

3. Dara had started preparations for war on a large scale obviously to win the throne.

4. Shah Jehan's death had been taken as a fact, so much so that when the news of the King's recovery and his appearance in the Jharoka at Agra reached his sons, they refused to accept it. They suspected that a eunuch who resembled the Emperor in appearance was made to appear in the Jharoka by Dara, in order to deceive them.

5. The Emperor and Dara took no practical steps to remove doubts from the minds of the princes or of the people. But, instead, all the troops of the Imperial Army sent in aid of Aurangzeb against the King of Bijapur were recalled. In utter confusion Aurangzeb had to abandon the operation and left the hostile country at a time when complete victory was a question of a few days. At this crucial juncture when the victory was in sight and the rumour of Emperor's death was getting strong, recalling of imperial troops enhanced suspicion and mistrust in the mind of Aurangzeb against his rival brother.

6. In the first week of illness, when Shah Jehan felt some relief, but no hope of recovery, he called to his presence some confidential courtiers and the chief officers of the State and made his last "will" before them and ordered them to obey Dara henceforth as their sovereign in everything, at all times and in every place In this matter Shah Jehan ignored his other sons who were not consulted on the matter.

7. The requests of the princes to see their ailing father and to come to the court were never granted.

the van was led by Prince Mohammad Sultan, the right wing under Murad Bakhsh, the left under Mustafa Khan and the centre under Aurangzeb. During the battle, Kasim Khan, the imperialist general, having left the field, Jaswant Singh was left to bear the brunt of the onslaught alone. He fought till only six hundred of his eight thousand Rajputs remained. Then dismay fell upon him. He too fled, leaving victory to the man to fight with whom, as the king of the Uzbegs had long ago said, "was self-destruction." The next day the armies of the two brothers marched towards Agra. Dara was determined that there should be no compromise between his father and brothers.

History bears ample evidence "that Shah Jehan constantly advised Dara not to engage in war, and always recommended peace—but he had grown too weak and so yielded to Dara—that before Samugarh again Shah Jehan wrote to Dara urging him to make peace and give up the design of fighting, but in vain—at last the Emperor determined to extinguish the war by going in person to the camp, and make peace with his exertions and speeches . . . . So, he ordered his advance tents to be pitched between the armies . . . ." But Dara would not let him to do that. Another incident is self-evident, that of Dara's adamant attitude to make peace with his brother. "That court-nobles pointed out to the Emperor that it would be a family disgrace if the brothers fought with one another, and worse still if Shah Jehan identified himself with any of them. He should let his sons visit him and then use the awe of majesty and personal influence to detach the ambitious nobles from their sides and send the princes back to their provinces. Shah Jehan approved of this advice. But Dara taunted the givers of such counsels with cowardice and treason, and indiscreetly boasted that, though they might not follow him, he would drive Aurangzeb's men back like hares with the help of Chhatra Sal Hada, a Hindu Rajput chief. The foreign Mohammadans (both Persian an Central Asian) resented this speech. They withdrew their hearts from Dara."

Then with an army finer than any that had trod the plains of Hindustan Dara marched out of Agra to entrench himself on

the bank of the river Chambal. But Aurangzeb had already deceived him by crossing lower down at night leaving his empty tents to deceive the enemy. Beside the river Jumna, he waited for Dara.

Chapter 15

THE BATTLE OF SAMUGARH

On 28 May the armies were in the vacinity of Samugarh, five leagues from Agra. Dara did not wait for the army of his victorious son to join him—the army which comprised of some seasoned generals of the imperals force like Raja Jai Singh. Even Shah Jehan urged him to wait for Sulaiman Shikoh, but Dara wanted glory for himself alone. He said to Shah Jehan, "In three days I will bring my brothers bound hand and foot to receive your judgment."

The time now had come ; the fate princes had to be decided the next day on the battlefield of Samugarh.

On 28 May, a day before the actual battle, Dara on hearing of Aurangzeb's approach marshalled his troops, put them in battle array and advanced as if to fight. But after traversing some distance halted the troops and seemed to change his mind, probably giving an opportunity to the enemy to launch an attack—thus he lost the initiative. On this day Aurangzeb was inferior in strength and his troops had just reached Samugarh after marching ten miles through intense heat and waterless desert. While Dara's troops were fresh, his enemy was tired and worn out. But still Dara, the lord of 50,000 horses, hesitated and made his troops to stand in the burning sun, waiting in vain for the enemy to take the initiative.

Historians blame Dara for this unwise step which, they say, "diminished his prestige in the minds of his troops and they lost confidence in him." Dara made his troops to stand in the burning sun in a sandy desert and the hot wind making their armour like ovens. Many died of heat and thirst. After the battle, one of his soldiers thus narrated their condition on this day:

with all our armour on, we were dried up even as we stood. Our feet could not move. The field seemed a blazing hell to us." At dusk, Dara after waiting for long retired to his camp. Aurangzeb halted his toops, bade them to rest ; night patrolling was carried out by his officers. During the hours of darkness Aurangzeb went in person to encourage his men for the coming day.

On "D" day (29 May) the order of battle of the two opposing armies was as follows:

(1) *Dara's Force.*—Different historians estimated the numbers engaged differently. Some give Dara's force as 70,000, 80,000; others one hundred thousand. Manucci gives it as 1,20,000. Probably his cavalry alone counted 50,000. The main bulk of his striking force composed of Rajput contingents and about half of the force composed of the imperial army.

His vanguard was composed of Rajput contingents, that of Hadas, Rathors, Sisodias and Gaurs under the command of Chahhtra Sal, a Hindu Rajput chieftain, whose bravery and firmness in battle had become a proverb. Others in the vanguard were Afghans under a renowned general Dilir Khan and selected cavalrymen under Askar Khan. It made the spearhead of Dara's army which was expected to break through the enemy host making a gap for the rest of the force to follow. It was estimated at from 17,000 to 20,000 strong. The advanced guard or the advanced reserve composed of 10,000 cavalry. Majority of them were Rajputs, and others were Dara's own soldiers. It was a sort of a flying column. Their task was to exploit the success of van or wings or come to their aid when hard pressed. It was stationed between the van and the centre. It was commanded by Kumar Ram Singh and Sayyid Bashir Khan.

The left wing was composed of 15,000 men, mostly Sayyids and troops of the imperial army. Sipihr Shikoh and Firuz Jang commaded the wing. Firuz Jang was popularly known as Rustam Khan. The centre was under the personal command of Dara Shikoh. Fifty thousand of the picked horsemen were at his hand and 12,000 to 15,000 selected swordsmen, archers, and others followed him in two columns, each commanded by Zafar Khan

and Fakhar Khan. Dara was sitting on a huge caparisoned elephant, visible from all sides in the battlefield. Other decorated elephants were by his side carrying guardsmen and musical bands.

The left wing was as strong as the right, and was commanded by Khalilullah Khan.

His entire front was covered up by artillery. Behind the wall of artillery stood thousands of foot musketeers, followed by about 500 camels carrying swivel guns. Foreign gunners under Capt. Manucci were employed in his artillery. At their back were rows of steel-clad elephants with sharp weapons tied to their trunks. Behind the elephants arrayed masses of cavalry made in various divisions.

(2) *Aurangzeb's Force.*—The total strength of Aurangzeb's army is estimated from 60,000 to 70,000 men approximately. His vanguard was composed of 10,000 Muslim soldiers under the command of his son Sultan Mohammad, who acted under the guidance of Najabat Khan, an experienced general who had recently been promoted to the rank of Khan-i-Khanan. The advanced reserve was a force of 5,000 cavalry under Sheikh Mir. They were the picked horsemen.

The left wing, composed of approximately 10,000 to 15,000 men was commanded by Murad Bakhsh.

The right wing of approximately 15,000 men, was composed of Muslim and Rajput contingents. The prominent Rajput leaders were Indradyumna of Dhamdhera, Champat Rao Bundela, Bhagwant Singh Heda. The overall commander of the right wing was Islam Khan. In the centre sat Aurangzeb on a huge elephant. His right and left flanks were placed under Bahadur Khan and Khan-i-Dauran, respectively. The artillery was deployed in front in two divisions under the command of Zulfiqar Khan and Saf-Shikan Khan. Most of the artillery pieces were manned by European gunners of Mir Jumla. The armoured elephants covered with barbs and steel plates and many sharp instruments tied to their trunks were stationed at intervals to fill small gaps.

On 29 May, long before dawn, there was stir and noise as

the battle preparations were being carried out in the two camps. The masses of infantry, squadrons of cavalry, armoured elephants and camels were being arranged in battle order, under their respective commanders, behind the walls of artillery.

Dara, on hearing the advance of Aurangzeb, left his camp and moved two miles ahead and halted. At about 8 o'clock, Aurangzeb advanced with his army towards the plains of Samugarh at a slow march, probably to keep up the formation and to save men from extra fatigue. By midday the crescent-marked banners of Aurangzeb could be seen by Dara from a considerable distance. Dara at once ordered his artillery to open fire. It was much too early as the enemy was yet quite out of range. Volleys after volleys were being fired in the air without any damage to the enemy columns approaching at a distance. The artillery leading Aurangzeb's columns kept mainly silent and did not open fire; however, a few guns boomed occasionally in reply to intense firing from Dara's artillery. For about an hour the two armies faced each other and this kind of cannonade continued. Aurangzeb's artillery still gave very short reply, and reserved the ammunition for more important hours of the battle.

Dara, because of his ignorance of war tactics, mistook the inactivity on the part of Aurangzeb's artillery as their weakness and, encouraged by the clouds of smoke made by his own artillery, decided to follow up the success by a charge. Thus his artillery ceased firing, bugles and trumpets sounded the signal to charge, and amongst deafening noises of musketry fire, roaring elephants and battle cries by the charging, cavaliers he fell upon Aurangzeb, who was still on the defensive, keeping all the formations intact.

It was noon and the burning sun had put the desert on fire. Dara's left wing under Rustam Khan burst out of the dust and smoke and the cavaliers waving their lances and swords fell upon the enemy guns to clear the way for the rest to follow up. Now was the turn of Aurangzeb's artillery. For this moment his gunners had been inactive and silent. Behind the guns stood the

musketeers to thicken the fire of guns. The moment Rustam Khan with his contingent came within range the artillery opened up, the musketry rattled and archers thickened the volleys of iron balls with their arrows. The cannon balls ploughed down into enemy rank and file and the onset of Rustam Khan was thus checked. Finding frontal thrust impossible, he wheeled right and attacked Aurangzab's vanguard, but Bahadur Khan commanding Aurangzeb's right flank came forward and plugged in between the artillery and the van thus barred Rustam's path. A terrible hand-to-hand battle ensued. Dara's general with his men fought so gallantly that Bahadur Khan's division was about to be routed, when Islam Khan and Sheikh Mir came with their contingents from the right wing and advanced reserve respectively to his aid. Bahadur Khan fell seriously wounded with three of his officers killed. Rustam Khan now being sandwiched from all sides maintained the combat. In a Persian history the loss and severity of this combat is thus described : "The blood had mounted waist high." Rustam Khan with his picked men perished. Islam Khan cut off his head and flung it on the ground in front of Aurangzeb, as a sign of victory. The survivors of Dara's left wing fled away under Siphir Shikoh.

The forward rush of his left wing, vanguard and right wing was simultaneous. Khalilullah Khan made a forward dash with the right wing, but his onslaught was checked by the archers of Prince Murad. Khalilullah made no further progress and this inactivity on his part is considered as an act of teachery and he is condemned as disloyal.

Dara's vanguard, led by Chhatra Sal, smashing all the opposition on the way, had penetrated deep into enemy's left wing and reached within striking distance of Murad who was sitting in a Howdah on a tall elephant. They had succeeded in separating the left wing from Aurangzeb's centre. A severe hand-to-hand battle ensued around Murad's elephant. With a string of pearls about his head and his Rajputs all in yellow, Raja Ram Singh charged upon the elephant of Murad Bakhsh, crying to the prince, "You dare contest the throne with Dara Shikoh." Hurling

his javelin at Murad Bakhsh, he tried to cut the elephant's girths, shouting to the mahout to make the animal kneel. But Murad, though wounded, sent an arrow through the Raja's brain. One after the other the Rajputs dropped at the elephant's feet until the ground all about him was yellow as a field of saffron. Murad had received three wounds in his face and the "Hawda" of his elephant with arrows struck in it looked like the back of a porcupine. This "Hawda" was long afterwards preserved in the store rooms of the Delhi fort. In this encounter the prince lost some of his best general like Yahya Khan, Sarfraz Khan and Rana Gharib Das, and his formation was broken. Alarm and confusion had spread in the left wing, when the victorious Rajputs dashed against Aurangzeb's centre, who was coming in aid of Murad. Here took place a battle which is spoken of to be without a parallel in the annals of that age. Wave after wave of Rajput cavaliers came and striked against the troops of Aurangzeb. Showers of arrows clouded the sun until everyman's quiver was empty. Then as men battled hand to hand, sword fighting began. Aurangzeb, mounted on an elephant, saw the condition of his men. He shouted to his hard pressed troops, and cried, "Dili yarana! What hope have we in flight? Know ye not where our Deccan is? Khuda-he! Khuda-he!" He ordered his men to chain the legs of his elephant, so that retreat might be impossible.

One Rajput chief, Raja Rup Singh Rathor, during a cavalry charge reached quite close to the elephant of Aurangzeb. He jumped down from his horse and with sword in hand tried to cut the girths of the Hawda in the hope of throwing down the prince from the elephant. He slashed the beast's legs, but was himself attacked by prince's bodyguards. Aurangzeb shouted to his men to spare such a hero's life, but he had already been cut to pieces.

The tough resistance put forth by Aurangzeb's bodyguards and his own heroic courage changed the course of battle. His guards in fresh condition prevailed over the Rajputs who were already exhausted by the struggle with Murad. Now the scattered rank and file of Aurangzeb closed in and the Rajputs were

enveloped by superior numbers, shot down by arrows, bullets and rockets, but still they maintained the fight. In this encounter one by one all their leaders fell, notable amongst them were Chhatra Sal Hada, Ram Singh Rathor, Bhim Singh Gaur and Shivaram Gaur. Thus both the wings of Dara Shikoh had by then annihilated.

It is imperative to discuss the actions and movements of the leader of the force, the Crown Prince Dara Shikoh, who commanded the centre of his grand army.

In the beginning when his vanguard, left wing and right wing closed in and joined the battle, he immediately quitted his position in the centre, rode through his artillery to support his left wing and came quite close to Aurangzeb's right, thus he committed a serious tactical mistake, as his artillery commander rightly pointed out after the battle : "This mistake ruined Dara for more than all other causes put together, the reason being that in the very beginning of battle he had quitted the centre, thus, he virtually abdicated his position as a general and became a mere divisional commander. He could no longer survey the whole field and control the battle. His troops at once lost the one supreme leader who could have directed their movements aright with every fresh development of the action, given unity to their efforts, and sent reinforcements where needed. At once everything fell in confusion."

This novice in the art of war committed another blunder by leading his cavalry and elephants through his artillery pieces and carrying on movements in front of them. The gunners had to stop fire, which irritated the artillery commanders, while with his entire force he reached within range of Aurangzeb's artillery, which played havoc with his troops. Bewildered and shocked at this and seeing the end of his left wing he sent orders to artillery commanders to move up. But it was too late; the gunners had already abandoned their positions and scattered to loot, there being no force behind the fighting line to punish such acts. Most of the transport animals had either run away or were dead on account of heat and fatigue; the guns could not thus be drawn. It

was a most unpardonable act on his part as a field commander to leave his complete artillery behind and then to lose its entire support.

Certain references pertaining to the episode are found in some old books of history, as follows:

(1) "Dara, who was ignorant of the rules of war and lacked experience in command, foolishly hastened with the centre and the advance reserve in person, after the charge of Rustam Khan, and placed his artillery behind himself" (*Alamgir Nama*).

(2) "Dara in great excitement and helplessness, forgetting true generalship, foolishly drove his elephant beyond his own artillery, charged with a party of Sayyids of Barha and Mughals and thus forced his own guns to be silent" (Kambu, 15a).

(3) "Dara like an inexpert fighter disordered his own arrangments of troops and advanced beyond his artillery" (Aqil, 47).

Sarkar gives Manucci's (Captain of Dara's artillery) account of Dara's successive movements and their evil consequence thus: "Issuing from his centre, Dara advanced by his left side towards Aurangzeb's right front, beating all his drums as if victory had already been achieved by Rustam Khan's charge and nothing was left but to follow it up and annihilate the enemy. But he was soon undeceived. Aurangzeb's artillery had, as we have seen, already repelled Rustam's cavaliers and stood calmly reserving their fire, until Dara had come quite close. Then all of a sudden the enemy discharged his cannon, musketry and swivel pieces, which struck us and frightened a number of our men, we scattered this way and that."

Dara with his centre could not withstand the heavy barrage of artillery fire, turned to the right and fell upon Aurangzeb's advance reserve. At that time Aurangzeb was in a very critical position. Being assailed by Dara's army he had pushed forward most of the troops and was left with the bare minimum. Had Dara at that time forced his way to his objective (Aurangzeb) he would have won the day, but, instead, he discontinued the offensive. Manucci writes, "But he made a short halt, owing to the difficulties of the ground and the fatigue that overcame him."

Thus his orce lost its growing momentum, while Aurangzeb profited from his slackness and dressed his ranks and closed the gaps. Dara again changed his mind; instead of going straight for the objective, he wheeled right and made his troops to march a long distance from his extreme left to the extreme right to aid Chatra Sal. This movement along the entire front, on the burning sand, played havoc with his troops. During this manoeuvre, while the heat and thurst killed men and beasts alike, the enemy artillery fired volleys straight into his left flank. When he reached near the shattered ramnants of his vanguard which now acted as its right wing, the vanguards of Aurangzeb which had not yet participated in the battle fell upon him. At that time Aurangzeb's right wing was also quite free to deal with Dara's force and artillery was immediately brought to the left to complete the envelopment. Dara had no artillery with him to give the covering fire or to counter bombardment.

All seemed to be lost, but Dara set his teeth and for a time exerted himself to stem the disaster. Manucci describes this part of the battle : "He [Dara] now utterly despaired of victory, but made a stand with outward firmness and encouraged his men. But Aurangzeb's troops, like the waves of the sea, approached him with countless guns in front of them. Near him the deadly fire fell so thick that Wazir Khan and some other newly created peers who stood in front of him were slain. Cannon balls carried off heads and limbs; shots weighing 16 lbs. and 20 lbs. flew."

Dara's elephant had come under concentrated artillery fire and his companions cried out to him to dismount. Dara hurriedly got down from the elephant and took a horse. The sight of his empty "Howda" sent panic through his host. Some cried that he was dead; others, that they were betrayed. Fear of Aurangzeb's vengeance upon those who had fought against him seized on all. They fled. Dara fled, leaving Aurangzeb to dismount from his elephant and prostrate himself before God in thanksgiving for the victory.

Dara's lack of practical experience in the art of war made him take certai n unwise steps, which cost him the victory. The

causes of his defeat are summarised as under:

(*a*) *Lack of Decision.*—He exhibited lack of decision quite often. One day before the battle he marched out to take the offensive, but on the way changed his mind and planned to fight a defensive battle. During the battle he decided to make for enemy's centre and led his men towards the objective. But he changed his mind at a time when he was not far from the objective and planned to make a long detour from the extreme right to help his vanguard.

(*b*) *Lack of Command and Control.*—He lacked the art of making a number of generals obey one masterly will and act in harmony and concert. While Aurangzeb had complete grip over his formations and was personally directing the operation, Dara lost all control over his men after bidding them to charge. Even his own artillery did not move up at his repeated orders to support him.

(*c*) *Lack of Cool Judgment and Wise Planning.*—He lacked these qualities because he had never learnt by practice how to guide the various tides of a battle with the coolness and judgment of a true general. Because he had never learnt to judge by the crucial test of danger and difficulty. When faced with danger he got excited, lost patience and took such hasty measures that proved fatal. Just by seeing the enemy banners at a far distance he at once ordered his artillery to open up. The artillery continued firing and wasted a considerable stock of ammunition and gun powder. Then he made the frontal attack when the enemy artillery was well within range and had reserved all their ammunition and gun powder. When his left wing made a forward dash he immediately quitted the centre and came in front of his own guns. These hasty and foolish tactical blunders ruined him.

(*d*) *Lack of Physical Endurance.*—Long, continued prosperity had made him physically soft. It seemed that soon after the battle was joined he got exhausted. When he made a forward thrust with a view to falling upon Aurangzeb's centre he halted on the way to take rest. This break in the momentum of his offensive gave Aurangzeb time to marshal his scattered troops and thus he

could never reach the objective.—This lack of endurance adversely affected his power of command, because a physically exhausted general cannot keep control over his commanders.

(*e*) *Lack of Co-operation.*—It seemed, there were mutual jealousies and lack of co-operation among Dara's followers The Muslim troops were jealous for the undue importance given to Rajputs and Rajput troops obeyed only the command of their chiefs and they were incapable of carrying out the supreme commander's tactics readily and efficiently.

(*f*) *Loss of Artillery Support.*—Artillery played a decisive role in deciding the issue. While Dara himself was responsible for loosing the entire artillery support, Aurangzeb's foreign gunners used it with great skill and efficiency.

(*g*) *Unfit Animals.*—Undoubtedly, animals played important role in battles of old days. Dara's horses and transport animals were out of condition; many of them had been overfed in the royal stables and were fit more for processions than the hardy task of battle. Most of them were half dead, by a day's futile march in the burning sun.

(*h*) *Khalilullah's Treachery.*—It is said that Khalilullah, the commander of Dara's right wing, had been bought over by Aurangzeb, that he made no further effort to continue the offensive and remained inactive during the battle. The allegation against him is not confirmed; it is only the historians' suspicion.

(*j*) *Premature Launching of the Striking Force.*—Dara's operational plan was to take the affensive, penetrate the enemy lines and then to force his way towards Aurangzeb's elephant—with a view to killing him. He knew that once Aurangzeb was killed his army would submit as a matter of course. To achieve this object, he, at the very outset, launched his striking force that was composed of fine troops of cavalry. But Aurangzeb, on the other hand, like the British commander in the battle of Waterloo, kept himself strictly on the defensive. He reserved his striking force patiently and firmly, and waited to let Dara exhaust himself. Dara in a fit of haste sent wave after wave of cavalry in successive

charges, making frontal attacks against the well-defended squares of Aurangzeb's force. When his right and left gave way and his centre was assailed by Prince Sultan's cavalry, he was left with no mobile troops for a counter charge. He was left with no trump card, which he now could throw to win the losing game.

Chapter 16

THRONE OR THE TOMB

Dara fled leaving 10,000 companions dead on the battlefield. With a small party of attendants he galloped towards Agra and, after traversing four to five miles, sat down utterly exhausted under a tree for taking rest. But they were soon startled by the roll of kettle-drums. The enemy was at his heals. His attendants urged him to mount and flee, but the tired prince refused to move. He said, "Let me get now what the fate has in store for me. What else can be better than this that one of the enemy should come and relieve me of this shameful life." However, his attendants succeeded in persuading him to flee.

At nine O' clock at night, Dara with a band of companions, rode through the streets of Agra, bypassed the main gate of the fort and headed towards his mansion. He entered his house and closed the door. Wild cries and loud lamentation of the ladies greeted him. The dismal news of the crown prince's defeat spread like wild fire. A wave of grief overtook the citizens of Agra; they expected the victorious hordes of Aurangzeb and Murad in the city any time and feared plunder of their life and property at their hand—and they were not wrong in their expectations.

When Shah Jehan heard the news of Dara's return from the battle he sent him a message to meet him in the fort. He wrote to him, "What has brought you down to such a state is only the decree of fate. It is better for you now to come to the fort and see me. After hearing what I have to say, you may go wherever fate leads you. What is predestined for you will happen at any place that you may be in."

But Dara had no face to show to his father and courtiers. The

day he left the fort at the head of the grand army he had said in a loud, voice, "Takht ya tabut," i.e. throne or the tomb. But he had returned from the battlefield defeated and alive. He also remembered the advice of his father and elder courtiers to avoid war and to settle the issue peacefully, which he had rejected. All these past incidents were bearing hard upon his mind and soul. He sent a humble reply to his father, saying that he had not the face to appear before his Majesty. In that he pleaded that if he stayed there longer his enemies would encircle and kill him.

Dara, after resting for a few hours, left Agra at 3 a.m. with his family, a few selected slave-girls, treasures, retainers and troops, whatever he could collect. Shah Jehan sent to him mules laden with gold coins from the palace treasury and orders were sent to the Governor of Delhi to open the treasure and stores of the fort to Dara.

On the way he was joined by his retainers and soldiers who could not accompany him at the time of departure, because of battle fatigue and the loss of their weapons and horses in the battlefield. By and by his contingent swelled to 5,000 men. Shah Jehan had been continuously sending him war material and money till Aurangzeb advanced towards Agra and cut off all its communications. All the property left over in Dara's house was looted the same night he left Agra.

On 1 June 1657, Aurangzeb and Murad encamped in a garden outside Agra. They stayed there for ten days. All efforts by Shah Jehan to call Aurangzeb in his presence had failed. Because Aurangzeb came to know of the murderous designs of his father. One day when, persuaded by his sister Jehan Ara, he went in procession to meet his father in the fort, his two generals Shaista Khan and Sheikh Mir rode up to him and warned him for running in such a needless danger. They told him that Shah Jehan had laid a trap for him—that as soon as he would enter the harem of the fort, he would be attacked by fierce Tartar slave-girls. Just then a slave Nahir Dil came from the fort and betrayed a secret letter to Aurangzeb. The Emperor's letter was addressed to Dara and

it read thus: "Dara Shikoh ! stay firmly at Delhi. There is no lack of money and troops there. Take care not to pass beyond that place, as I myself shall despatch the affair here."

Some contemporary writers regard this letter as forged by Aurangzeb. Whatever it was, Aurangzeb bypassed the fort gate and occupied Dara's house. During the fortnight that Aurangzeb stayed at Agra the following incidents occurred :

(1) Some soldiers of Murad entered the city of Agra and carried out looting. The matter was reported to Aurangzeb in time and he sent his son Sultan Mohammad with troops to keep law and order.

(2) Aurangzeb's army besieged the fort and the Emperor put up resistance for a few days and finally surrendered.

(3) The Emperor was made captive in the fort and Prince Sultan Mohammad was put on him as a personal attendant. All imperial officers were replaced in the fort by trusted men of Aurangzeb and strict security measures were taken on the incoming and outgoing mail.

(4) By a clever move while on his way to Delhi, Murad was made captive and sent to the fort of Salimgarh.

Though Prince Shuja still remained, Aurangzeb now set out to deal with Dara, who was preparing to make a stand against him at Delhi. Dara by then had collected troops and all the arsenals, weapons and animals of the royal stables were at his disposal. But the news of Aurangzeb's advance towards Delhi unnerved him and he planned to flee. He faced the dilemma as to where to flee. Going to Allahabad and making alliance with Shuja was not so feasible, as he had already bought his enmity by sending his son Suleiman Shikoh against him. The Punjab was a wise choice, because it was the home of soldiers and quite close to the Afghan border, where he could collect an army of mercenaries. The Punjab had long been his province and was held by his faithful Governor Ghairet Khan. There were enough of war stores, money, arsenal and magazine in the Lahore fort. So, the prince with his retinue fled towards the Punjab and reached Sirhind. Then after crossing the river Sutlej and destroying all ferries behind him he

reached Lahore on 3 July.

In Lahore Dara busied himself in raising a new army and even before his arrival the preparations were already in progress by his trusted lieutenant Sayyid Ghairet Khan. He sent letters and robes of honour to Jagirdars and Zamindars of the Punjab, Multan, Thatta and Peshawar and invited them to join him with their troops.

He had raised an army of 20,000 men and some of the imperial commanders also joined him. Within a short period his military strength increased considerably and he sent a force under Daud Khan to stop the enemy crossing at Sutlej. Dara had predicted that Aurangzeb would not have been left with so much stamina after fighting the two battles to traverse such a long distance during the heavy monsoons and that the flooded nullahs and rivers on the way would become obstacles for him, which would delay his advance. Thus he would get considerable time to organise his army. By guessing that way he had underestimated Aurangzeb's foresight, energy and the strength of his will. Within three weeks of Dara's arrival in Lahore, Aurangzeb's leading troops had reached the banks of Sutlej and found the right bank strongly guarded by Dara's troops.

Aurangzeb left Agra on 13 June and on 15 reached Delhi. On hearing Dara's flight towards Lahore, he decided to stay in Delhi to give rest to the troops and streamline the administration. On 21 July, in a brief ceremony he was crowned in the garden of Shalimar outside Delhi and assumed the title of Alamgir. A week afterwards he went in pursuit of Dara Shikoh.

Aurangzeb had instructed his naval department to construct boats which were to be carried on the wagons along the vanguard. Bahadur Khan crossed the Sutlej at Rupar, which was lightly held. After crossing the river at night he charged Dara's men, who put no resistance and fled. Bahadur Khan was closely followed by Khalilullah Khan with a large force. All the ferries of the Sutlej were at once evacuated and Khalilullah, the newly appointed Governor of the Punjab, made a forced march and crossed the river near Rupar. What an irony of fate that Khalilulllah

who was once a trusted lieutenant of Dara and commanded his right wing in the battle of Samugarh was now hotly chasing this unfortunate prince. Probably this was the bribe (governorship of Punjab), offered to him by Aurangzeb, that made him to betray his master, in the battle of Samugarh. Aurangzeb reached Rupar with the main army and in the meantime Dara's force defending Sutlej and Bias withdrew completely. When Aurangzeb reached Garh Sarang he learnt about Dara Shikoh's flight from Lahore.

Dara, on hearing the news of Aurangzeb's arrival near Sutlej, lost heart and even with a force of 20,000 men dared not face his rival in the battlefield. In utter disgust he frankly admitted before his generals who were willing to give battle : "At present I am not in a position to resist Aurangzeb. Had there been anybody else I would have fought him here." It is said that this lack of determination and boldness on his part at that crucial time adversely affected the losing side and most of his companions marched off to join the banner of victory. Aurangzeb had also been constantly sending letters full of temptation to Dara's officers and succeeded in seducing most of them. Prominent amongst the deserters were Raja Rajrup (landlord of Jammu hills) and Khanjar Khan (Imperial military Commander of Bhera and Khushab).

Chapter 17

MASTERLY TRICK

A masterly trick of Aurangzeb had made Dara so much mentally upset that he became suspicious about his own confidants. It so happened that when Daud Khan, the Commander-in-Chief of Dara's army, was defending the river Bias, Aurangzeb sent him a letter and contrived that it should be intercepted by Dara's men and should be delivered to him. It read thus : "I received your letter, which reached me at . . . place. You prayed for my success. I appreciate your feelings and approve of your present move. I will be proceeding very soon to the side, which you suggested. As promised you shall meet me there. Your plan is very sound and I fully approve of it for dealing not only with Siphir Shikoh, but all the enemies of the Prophet and his faith. We will soon deliver a death blow to the enemies of Islam."

It was a false letter, but its after effects were very grave. Daud Khan was innocent, he had never corresponded with Aurangzeb, but Dara got suspicious of him. It is said that the future grew absolutely dark to Dara as he read it; he sank into grief and suspicion got possession of him. He immediately recalled Siphir Shikoh from the side of Daud Khan and weakened the party that held the Bias river. When Daud Khan returned, he found his master a changed man, ever turning a clouded face and casting suspicious looks at him. The distance between the master and his army chief grew wider and wider. During Dara's flight, when he left Sukkur and most of his companions also left him, Daud Khan asked him the cause of his being suspicious and indifferent towards him and protested against doubts about his loyalty. His words having no effect on Dara, which he took to be hypocritical, he dismissed Daud Khan from service, saying, "My environments

are so bad that even those who were brought up under my care and protection are leaving me. On you I have conferred no such bounties that I can ask you to be a fugitive from your home and wander in misery for my sake. It is proper that you should leave me here and go wherever your heart desires."

Daud was shocked to hear his master's verdict and again asserted his devotion and refused to desert him, even disobeying his order. Heart-broken and disgusted with life, Daud made straight for his harem. He killed all the honourable ladies, in order to be free from anxiety about them. He came back to Dara and entreated him to banish doubts about his loyalty and devotion, because he had no family left which might change his fidelity. But even the blood of his family which he had shed to win his confidence could not convince Dara of his loyalty.

Dara, without giving battle to Aurangzeb, had left Lahore with about 12,000 troops and hastened to Multan. But the pursuer was not far behind. Khalilullah Khan had sent a force from Garh Shankar under Tahir Khan to reach Lahore by forced marches and occupy the masterless city, which he did on 24 August. Khalilullah reached the vicinity of Lahore on 29 and without halting went in pursuit of Dara towards Multan. Aurangzeb crossed Bias on 11 September and got a message of Khalilullah that Dara was expected to give battle in Multan. He showed fear about the outcome of this battle on the plea that he had no general with him to encounter a prince of the Mughal blood and win the loyalties of men in a fight against him. Khalilullah dared not face Dara and encamped away from Multan waiting for Aurangzeb's reply.

Aurangzeb on receipt of this message started off to Multan. He left behind all the heavy baggage and unwanted troops and advanced with a small tent, essential stores and the pick of his men. On the way he got the information that Dara had fled from Multan to Bhakkar. Aurangzeb despatched Safshikan Khan with 6,000 troops in pursuit of Dara and sent orders to Khalilullah to occupy Multan and wait till his arrival.

On 25 September Aurangzeb reached the outskirts of Multan and got the alarming news of Shuja's advance from the east. So, he returned, leaving Dara's pursuit to his generals.

When Dara left Lahore, his men started deserting him; even his pay-master Khwajah Sadiq left him and went over to his rival's side. In Multan he stayed for a week, took possession of all the treasures from the local treasury and made off towards Bhakkar. Here half of his companions deserted him. He got his treasures loaded in big boats and despatched them *via* Indus to Bhakkar under the charge of Firuz Miwati, one of his generals, and Basant, his trusted eunuch. After sending this party he marched off towards Uch. He reached Uch on 23 September, while hotly pursued by the Imperial commanders. They were only four days march behind him. Without halting at Uch, he fled to Sukkur and stayed there for five days.

Chapter 18

THE GREAT LADY

On this painful flight Dara was accompanied, among others, by his beloved wife Nadira Bano, the daughter of Prince Parwiz and grand-daughter of Emperor Akbar who had borne her husband all his three sons and one daughter. She was a very wise and charming lady and Dara was greatly devoted to her. The wives and children of Suleiman Shikoh and Siphir Shikoh also accompanied them.

Khalilullah had reached Multan on 21 September and sent parties in all directions to find out Dara's route of flight. The scouts lost trail of the prince and did not know whether he had fled towards Rajputana or Sind. But Dara's treasure boats were intercepted by a big Zamindar of Sind, Haji Khan Baluch, and he disputed in vain their passage through the river. The news reached the newly appointed Governor of the Punjab, Khalilullah Khan, and he at once ascertained the route of flight of the unfortunate prince.

Meanwhile Aurangzeb had sent enough money and reinforcements for the pursuit of Dara Shikoh. He had also appointed Sheikh Mir and Dilir Khan to augment the pursuit. By the first week of October a force of 15,000 men, with enough artillery, marched in two columns under seasoned generals of Aurangzeb. Each of them tried to bypass the other in pursuit with the hope of winning the laurels by presenting the head of Dara Shikoh to the Emperor as a token of victory. So, while Sheikh Mir halted on the way to give rest to the troops, Saf Shikan Khan continued the march in the desert of Sind, where considerable number of his men and beasts perished due to heat and thirst. Their objective was Sukkur. About a hundred miles

north of Bhakkar the two generals led their divisions on the two banks of Indus. Sheikh Mir marched on the right bank and Saf Shikan Khan on the left. Saf Shikan Khan reached Sukkur on 21 October, while Sheikh Mir reached Bhakkar, covered 160 miles in three days and suffered great hardships on the way. On the fourth day he joined Saf Shikan Khan at Sukkur.

On their arrival, they learnt that their prey had again dodged them and slipped southwards. Dara had left the heavy baggage, some ladies of harem, heavy guns and precious articles of gold and silver in the Bhakkar fort in charge of Basant and Sayyid Abdul Razzaq. A strong party was also left behind for the defence of the fort. Manucci, the captain of Dara's artillery, was also left with a party of European gunners to defend the fort.

Dara with a party of 3000 men marched southwards on the right bank of Indus, while his treasure was despatched in boats. Most of the commanders left behind lost confidence in their leader, as Dara refused to make a stand even at Sukkur. Some of them went back to their homes; others joined Aurangzeb. He had dismissed Daud Khan, his military chief, whom he baselessly suspected of disloyalty. Daud Khan could not convince his master of his innocence. So, he left Dara in miserable condition, and went over to Aurangzeb who gave him a high post.

Dara with approximately 2500 men reached Larkana and planned to adopt the route to Kandhar. But the ladies of the harem and his attendants disagreed with his plan, saying that the journey on that route would be unsafe. He changed his mind, macrhed southward and reached Sehwan. His treasure boats, however, were being brought *via* river Indus.

Near Sehwan Dara was overtaken by Saf Shikan's force, but the Indus river stood between the rival parties. Saf Shikan failed in his attempt to capture the treasure boats gliding down the river due to Dara's large flottila, equipped with naval guns. However, the boats came under fire from the Sehwan fort, but all got away safely except two which were lightly damaged.

Saf Shikan, having not enough boats to cross the river, ordered the fort commander to come out of the fort and attack

Dara's little force. But the "Qiladar" could not pick up courage to attack the crown prince, even knowing that his position was very weak. Dara in the meantime gave the slip and with 1000 cavalry and 10 elephants marched towards Thatta.

The two imperial generals, on reaching Thatta, came to know that the prince had reached Badin, and was marching towards the Rann of Cutch and probably heading towards Gujrat.

The generals with their armies were in a miserable condition. Because of the continued forced marches and the heat and thirst that they bore on the deserts of Sind, badly fatigued them. The men and beasts suffered equally. On the route of retreat of this unfortunate prince lay here and there carcasses of men and animals, of friends and foes, being desecrated by wild beasts.

But all praise to Nadira Bano, the great lady who still accompanied her husband, attending him in difficulty and cheering him in adversity and bearing all the hardships with courage and patience.

Chapter 19

GOD-SENT BLESSING

There was yet another brother to be dealt with. Shuja was once more in arms and heading towards Agra. Aurangzeb had recalled the generals who were put in pursuit of Dara, in order to meet the new threat. The armies faced each other at Khajwa on 3 January.

In this battle Aurangzeb's right wing was commanded by Raja Jaswant Singh of Marwar, a famous Rajput chief of Rajasthan, who had been defeated by Aurangzeb in the battlefield of Dharmat. Apparently the Maharaja showed allegiance to the prince, but his loyalties were still with Dara. His treachery was made known on the night before the battle was joined.

A day before the battle Raja Jaswant had sent a secret message to Shuja saying that he would attack the imperial camp in the late hours of the night and that when Aurangzeb would move with his troops to repel him, Shuja should at once attack the disorganised army. But Shuja dared not take the risk, fearing it might be a trap contrived by Aurangzeb and Jaswant for him. But Jaswant with his 14,000 Rajputs treacherously deserted his post and fell upon Prince Mohammad's camp which lay in the path of their flight. The camp was plundered, guards killed and animals taken away by the traitors. The confusion spread to the army in front. The news caused distraction among the troops, and their order was broken. The commanders left their posts and their men ran about, in order to save their lives from the deserters.

During this confused state in the camp, Aurangzeb was engaged in the Tahajjud prayer in his field tent. When the tragic news of Jaswant's treachery and desertion reached him, he did

not utter a word, but waved his hand, meaning, "If he has left, let him go." After the prayer he came out of his tent and spoke to officers. He said, "This incident is a God-sent blessing. Had the traitor betrayed us amidst the battle, the result would have been complete disaster. His flight is a good omen for victory. So pray to God who saved us from this infidel at such a crucial time." Jaswant with his troops marched off to Jodhpur and Aurangzeb organised a fresh right wing under Islam Khan.

The next day the armies met at Khajwa. The battle was joined at 8 o'clock and by afternoon Shuja's army was on retreat. Mir Jumla was sent in pursuit of Shuja who chased the prince across Bengal to the Deccan and expelled him beyond the Arakan frontier. Nothing about him was heard afterwards, but it is assumed that he was murdered with his family and attendants by the Arakanese.

Jaswant Singh, after deserting Aurangzeb in Khajwa, passed near Agra, while on his way back to Jodhpur and his men spread rumours that Aurangzeb had been defeated in the battle. The news reached Dara Shikoh, who after suffering unspeakable hardships had reached Ahmedabad, the capital of Gujrat. Shah Nawaz Khan, the newly appointed Governor, received him kindly and opened to him the treasury.

Shah Nawaz Khan was the father-in-law of Aurangzeb and Murad Bakhsh. But his daughter married to Aurangzeb had died and so he felt no natural attachment towards him. He had personal grudge against Aurangzeb for having imprisoned him at Burhanpur on his refusal to join the prince in the rebellion against Shah Jehan and for treacherously making Murad Bakhsh his prisoner.

The rumour of Aurangzeb's defeat in Khajwa made Dara to change his plans for going to the Deccan. He missed a golden chance of slipping away to the Deccan where he could very well count upon the help of the kings of Bijapur and Golkhanda, who were indebted to him for opposing Aurangzeb's invasions of their territory in the imperial court. But as luck would have it, he planned to make a dash towards Agra with an army of 22,000

strong which he had raised with the help of Shah Nawaz Khan.

On 14 February 1659, he marched towards Agra, with trusted officers and hardy troops. On his way he got the news that the rumour was unfounded; Aurangzeb was the victor and he was heading towards Delhi. Dara was demoralised, but his sorrows were partially alleviated by a friendly message from Raja Jaswant Singh, who was impatiently waiting for Dara to join him at Ajmer. In the letter he had expressed his devotion to Shah Jehan and requested Dara to waste no time and hasten to Ajmer where Rathor and Rajput contingents would join him.

It was not an easy affair to outwit Aurangzeb. After the battle of Khajwa, he had despatched an army under Mohammad Amin Khan to conquer Marwar and expel Jaswant Singh. Probably he wanted to teach him a lesson. For some days Jaswant put up resistance, but finding his means of coercion inadequate fled towards the hill fort of Siwana.

In the meantime Raja Jai Singh requested Aurangzeb to let him act as a mediator. He wrote a letter to the rebel chief expressing devotion and true friendship for him and warned him about the consequences, if he remained disloyal to the crown, which he feared might result in complete destruction of his state and family. However, he promised that if he showed allegiance and left Dara's side he would secure for him a full pardon and restoration of his title and mansab. At that time Jaswant was hard pressed and demoralised, and his "will" gave way. He at once accepted the offer and requested the Emperor's pardon.

Dara, on reaching Mairta, got no signs of Jaswant coming to his aid. He sent Duni Chand, a trusted messenger, to urge the Maharaja to fulfil his promise. But he was sent back with the reply that he was busy in raising troops.

Chapter 20

THE BATTLE OF DEORAI

Dara reached Ajmer and sent his son Prince Siphir Shikoh to Jodhpur to persuade Jaswant to come with his troops to Ajmer. The prince was received with all respect and courtesy and he stayed at Jodhpur for three days. The prince persuaded the Maharaja in vain and at last retured to his father disappointed.

Now there was no escape for Dara. By that time Aurangzeb had reached near Ajmer and a battle was inevitable. Bernier writes, as Dara said, "Although the match is altogether unequal, still let us stake all and give battle once more. It is better to perish here with honour."

Dara took a wise step in deciding to hold the pass of Deorai, than to fight a pitched battle in the open plain against the overwhelming strength of Aurangzeb. Deorai was four miles south of Ajmer flanked by two hills, Bithli and Gokla. In this narrow breadth of the pass, a small force could hold a superior army for a considerable time.

Dara's force was holding a long line of high features and their strength and disposition were as follows:

(1) The right and left flanks of Dara's force were secured by the two hills mentioned above and the city of Ajmer lay four miles in the rear. A wall was built in front to cover the gap and behind it trenches were dug.

(2) The entire line of defence which was in an extended form divided into four sectors. Each sector was under a commander reinforced with artillery and musketeers.

(3) On Dara's right facing the enemy and touching the hill of Bithli (several miles in length) lay the trenches of Sayyed Ibrahim and Jani Beg (Dara's master gunner). Next started the trenches of

Feruz Miwati and beyond them on a small hill overlooking the pass were deployed a few big guns. The centre was held by Dara and his staff. On his left lay the third sector of trenches under Shah Nawaz Khan and the fourth sector adjoining the Gokla hill (shorter in length and lower in height) was commanded by Siphir Shikoh.

(4) The position selected was ideal for fighting a defensive battle. The high features rendered it difficult for the enemy to climb up under heavy fire of Dara's artillery and musketeers and two hill ranges running beyond Ajmer made its flanks quite secure, as they could be turned only by making a wide detour.

On 11 March 1659, Aurangzeb with his force halted one mile from Deorai, while Dara's trenches lay two miles ahead.

At night a fighting patrol of 150 men under Purdil Khan succeeded in climbing a hill, which lay in the mid-distance of the two armies. At dawn Dara's men saw them and sent a party of skirmishers to dislodge them. The patrol held its position and was reinforced by 2000 men, but Dara also reinforced his skirmishers. The fighting lasted for four hours. Purdil Khan held the ground and imperial artillery was safely brought forward. As the artillery opened up Dara's skirmishers withdrew to their original posts.

The moment this vital ground was secured, the leading elements of Aurangzeb's army moved forward. Both the armies now faced each other, at a close distance. However, Aurangzeb could not deploy the whole force, because of the narrowness of the pass and slopes in front.

On 12 March, most of the time was utilised by the imperial forces in bringing forward their troops and artillery. By dusk their order of battle was formed.

The battle started on the 12th evening with artillery duel. The whole night this kind of cannonade continued and lasted till the afternoon of 13th. The imperialists who edeavoured to dig trenches with a view to covering their front were attacked and repulsed by Dara's men. After that Dara's two thousand cavaliers came in

the open to give battle. The challenge was accepted by Aurangzeb's horsemen and the battle continued till it was night, when the opposing parties retired.

Dara's artillery was playing havoc with the advancing imperialists but the cannon balls of Aurangzeb's artillery, instead of hitting the enemy, were falling on the stones. The artillery duel also continued on the 13th night.

The imperialists had realised that the enemy defences could not be stormed by any strength of force and they changed their minds for making an all-out assault. The plan to storm the defences with cavalry charge was abandoned.

On the 14th, Aurangzeb called his generals and reprimanded them for their inability to dislodge the enemy who was inferior to them in strength.

Aurangzeb called a council of war. The old plan on conventional methods of fighting the battle was scrapped, as it proved ineffective. A fresh plan was decided upon. It is summarised as follows :

(1) Instead of attacking the whole front, the main punch of assault was to be delivered at one point to make a breach. The point of attack had to be selected carefully.

(2) The enemy's flanks had to be bypassed by some troops for turning its rear. Enemy's left flank was to be turned by a secret move.

(3) The attack was to be delivered in a concentrated form with overwhelming strength. Maximum artillery support was to be provided to the attackers.

(4) Surprise and deception were to be maintained at all times and once the attack was launched, its momentum was to be kept up at all costs.

(5) Enemy defences away from the point of attack were to be engaged by artillery and musketeers and they should be prevented from coming in aid of their troops being attacked.

There was no soft point on the right of Dara and the high and long features of Bithli made it difficult to outflank him. On

his left the small and low hill Gokla presented the opportunity of bypassing. It had gentler slopes and threw off spurs on its eastern side which were close to the assailants, but hidden from Dara's position. Raja Rajrup of Jammu hills, who had deserted Dara at Lahore and had gone over to Aurangzeb, was selected for this job—to bypass the Gokla hill in the evening with his clansmen, expert mountaineers, and to ascend from the back of the hill. A party of musketeers was attached to this commando force. Shah Nawaz's trenches near the Gokla hill were to be stormed by all the might.

At dusk, when the artillery fire subsided and the gunners after the day-long duel retired to rest, Raja Rajrup sent his commandos behind the Gokla hill. While his men, after making a long detour, started climbing from behind, he appeared with his cavalry in front to divert the enemy's attention. The defenders reacted sharply, a thousand cavaliers sallied out of Shah Nawaz Khan's trenches and encountered Raja Rajrup. The imperial generals rebuked by the Emperor were impatiently waiting for this hour. The sight of the enemy within easy reach roused their martial spirit and they moved forward. Jai Singh led the vanguard, Dilir Khan his Afghan troops, Sheikh Mir the left wing and Shaista Khan the right. The move was sudden and simultaneous. The main bulk of the force was concentrated on Shah Nawaz Khan's trenches, while light troops supported by artillery and musketeers were engaging Dara's right and centre.

Sheikh Mir and Dilir Khan advanced on Shah Nawaz Khan's trenches and a terrible battle ensued. The imperial artillery reopened with intense fire on Dara's trenches and prevented his right and centre from coming to aid Shah Nawaz Khan. Dara's artillery and musketeers showered death on the assailants and the slaughter on Aurangzeb's side was heavy. Dara's generals put up a very gallant fight and his artillery and musketeers deployed on the whole front were mutually supported, showering cannon balls and bullets on the assailants.

The attackers maintained the momentum of the attack. Wave

after wave of their horsemen dashed on towards the trenches. The places of the dead were immediately taken over by fresh men and horses, galloping uphill and charging. Shah Nawaz Khan's forward trenches were won over and a breach made.

By that time Raja Rajrup's men had succeeded in climbing up at the back of the Gokla hill and planted their flags. The defenders were caught unaware and were completely surprised to see the enemy shouting on their rear. Dara's left wing was seized with despair, because its rear had been turned.

Sheikh Mir sitting on an elephant led the charge through the gap, but Dara's men still fought with valour. A bullet struck him down, but he told Hashim Khan sitting near him in the Howdah that he should clasp him round the waist and keep his head up so that his followers might not know of his death and give up fighting. Hashim Khan obeyed his dead master and kept his body up to the end of the battle.

Night was approaching fast and the imperialists had broken through Shah Nawaz Khan's forward defences and a fierce battle was in progress, when an arrow struck Dilir Khan and he fell unconscious. At that critical stage of the battle Jai Singh with his fresh troops came for rescue and the momentum of the assault was thus maintained. Against enemy's overwhelming strength Dara's left wing gave way. A general massacre of Dara's men in the left sectors began. Shah Nawaz Khan, standing on a mound, was encouraging his men, when his body was blown away by a cannon ball. Mohammad Sharif, Mohammad Kheshgi and Abu Bakr had been slain. Shah Nawaz Khan's son had been seriously wounded. The main thrust of the enemy's attack was heading towards Dara's centre. His right wing was still held by a strong force under Feruz Mivati and Askar Khan.

Night fell and everything fell into confusion. "In the darkness swords dashed ; friends could not be known from foes ; the warriors of the two armies fell down fighting side by side," wrote Kambu. But as the shades of the night closed on the scene, the truth was made known. Dara had lost the battle. The capture of Shah Nawaz Khan's defences and the surprise causedyq

enemy troops who climbed Gokla hill had turned the tables. It was clear to his men that the battle was lost and they refused to risk their lives any more. The cover of night presented them a golden opportunity to flee.

Before the battle, Dara had left his harem and treasure on elephants, horses and mules five miles away from the scene of battle on the bank of Anasagar lake with an armed escort under a faithful eunuch Khwaja Maqbul. His intention was to take them along during flight.

When Dara's centre was attacked, he did not make a stand, but fled away with his son Siphir Shikoh, Feruz Miwati and approximately fifteen men, leaving behind 8000 dead on the battlefield. Aurangzeb lost 5000 men and one hundred and fifteen elephants were killed on both sides, as estimated by Kambu.

Dara with this small party fled in hot haste towards Gujrat and forgot to take along his family and treasure. They were waiting impatiently for his orders near the Anasagar lake.

Since midday the ladies had been kept in the saddle in a state of fear and suspense, expecting any moment the news of disaster. The noise of battle and the booming of guns could be heard by them. As the shades of night closed in, the first signs of dispersion of an army were observed by them. Afterwards bands of victors were seen advancing towards Ajmer, killing and looting. Still the poor ladies got no message from their master. By then no doubt was left in their minds about the outcome of the battle. On the sight of the disaster most of the guardsmen escorting Dara's family deserted and joined the ranks of the victors. But Khwaja Maqbul with great tact and exertion made escape with the party, making his way between the skirt of hills and the valley of Ajmer.

A few days before the battle thousands of Rajputs had assembled in the vicinity of Ajmer at the invitation of Dara, but they did not take part in the fight due to the defection of Jaswant Singh. They were ravaging the country around. Most of Dara's treasure was looted. His mules laden with gold

coins entrusted to Rajput chiefs of Ajmer were taken away by them. His base camp was plundered and booty beyond calculation was seized by the troops. Dara could not take anything with him except the jewels he wore and the coins kept in the "Howdah" of elephants carrying his women.

When Dara fled, none of his generals accompanied him except Feruz Miwati. At night when the news of Dara's flight reached his senior commanders, they gave up fighting and surrendered themselves to the victors. The prominent amongst those who surrendered were Askar Khan, Sayyed Ibrahim and Jani Beg. Mohammad Sharif, Dara's paymaster who was seriously wounded, was given medical treatment by his enemies, but he could not survive.

Next morning, on 15 March, Aurangzeb got news of victory. He mourned the death of Sheikh Mir and rewarded Hashim for holding up his master's dead body in the Howdah during the battle. Sheikh Mir was buried with honour in the enclosure of Saint Moinuddin Chishti's tomb. Shah Nawaz Khan who had died while fighting against him was also buried there. After that a strong force was sent under Jai Singh and Bahadur Khan in pursuit of Dara Shikoh.

The causes of Dara's defeat in the battle of Deorai are summarised as under :

(1) *Disparity in number.* Dara's force, as compared to Aurangzeb's, was in the ratio of approximately one to three.

(2) *Morale.* The morale of his officers and troops was very low, because they were fighting under a man who had never won a victory. Being constantly defeated and chased like rabbits, they had lost heart. They resolved to fight and put up a last stand knowing what lay in store for them.

(3) *Hasty deployment of troops.* It showed that before the occupation of defences he did not carry out proper reconnaisance of the area. Certain vital features in the vicinity of the defensive area were left undefended, which were easily occupied by the enemy's leading troops.

(4) *Flank protection.* It seemed he did not send mobile screens, patrols or protective detachments on the flank and rear of the defences. When Raja Rajrup's men bypassed his left flank, he did not know about this move.

(5) *All-round defence.* Being ignorant of the rules of war, he was absorbed only in fighting the enemy in front. Probably he did not visualise that the enemy could outflank him and come in his rear. He left the rear undefended and when the hardy mountaineers of Jammu hills were toiling up behind his defences, he did not know about them.

(6). *Weak commanders.* Shah Nawaz Khan was not a seasoned general. The enemy turned his rear and surprised him, and when attacked from the front he could not keep hold over his men for long ; while Siphir Shikoh, who commanded the extreme left, was just a teen-aged boy, who did nothing to secure his left flank and knew nothing about the enemy's move on his left. When the enemy's pressure increased on his sector he was amongst the first few who fled to join their master.

(7) *Lack of determination.* Dara on so many occasions had vowed to win or perish. But once confronted with a dangerous situation in the field, he lost heart and fled. In the battle of Deorai when he fled, his centre and right wing were still intact.

On the night of 13th and next day Dara with his small party pursued his flight. His harem had been taken out of danger by Khwaja Maqbul and he was leading them by a different route when by chance the parties met near Mairata, about thirty-seven miles from Ajmer.

Chapter 21

MORE DEAD THAN ALIVE

Dara with his family and attendants rested at Mairatà for some time. But the enemy let them no rest, and this unfortunate prince had to pack up and resume his march the same night. On the way parties of his scattered troops joined him, and the number increased to 2000. Thousands of other troopers who had fled by other routes could not join him. One party taking Dara's war elephants went in a different direction towards Sambhar and was lost for ever.

When Dara reached Mairata the pursuers were six days behind and the rumour of their coming nearer deprived the prince and his followers of their badly needed rest. Dr. Bernier who was left behind followed Dara's route of flight and what he observed on the way he recorded: "Sight of dead men, elephants, oxen, horses and camels; the ramnants of poor Dara's army lay here and there on the route of his flight." In the intense heat, suffocating dust and on the path which lay on the sandy waste, the party of fugitives moved on. Bands of robbers and professional dacoits followed them day and night, attacking during the hours of darkness and killing the strugglers. Covering thirty miles a day with his womenfolk and attendants Dara reached forty-eight miles north of Ahmedabad on 29 March. There he got information that his governor had been expelled from the city and the gates of the fort were shut against him. The fugitives who were going to Ahmedabad with the hope of getting refuge got demoralised and did not know what to do. They had abandoned their baggage and tents in their hasty departure from the battlefield and were now left with nothing to sleep on except the bare ground. It was evening when Dara got the news, dashing his last hope

of refuge. Doctor Bernier who had then joined the party recorded the shaking effect of the news on the fugitives; "The shrieks of the females drew tears from every eye. We were all overwhelmed with confusion and dismay, gazing in speechless horror at each other, at a loss what plan to recommend, and ignorant of the fate which perhaps awaited us from honr to hour. We observed Dara stepping out, more dead than alive, speaking now to one, then to another; stopping and consulting even the commonest soldier. He saw consternation depicted on every countenance and felt assured that he should be felt without a single follower."

Aurangzeb had sent letters to all the petty rulers of Sind and the Punjab to arrest Dara if he entered their territory and also warned them of the consequences if they showed any mercy towards him. Jai Singh while in persuit was joined by Jaswant Singh near Gujrat. Jai Singh sent letters to the princes and zamindars in every direction to bar Dara's path. Dara was surrounded by enemies on all sides, waiting to seize him.

Dara, fearing capture, risked to return to Sind. Fate had made him destitute of power and influence Dr. Bernier writes: "Neither his threats nor entreaties could procure a single horse, ox or camel for him [Dr. Bernier] who attended his sick wife, Nadira Banu." The Doctor was left behind due to lack of transport. Dara made way towards Kari district, where a Kuli chief led him safely to the boundary of Cutch. Dara's condition is described as follows: "reduced to the poorest and sorriest dress,—a tunic of thin linen and shoes worth eight annas, with a heart broken into two and constantly shaking with fear, accompanied by one horse, one bullock cart, five camels for his ladies, and a few other camels for transport, his retinue shrunk to a few men." There he was joined by his military governor of Surat, ousted from the city and roaming about in search of refuge with fifty cavaliers and 200 musketeers.

Dara crossed the lesser Rann of Cutch and reached Bhuj, the capital of Cutch State. There he found the Maharaja of Cutch, once his friend and protector, totally a changed man. The letters from Jai Singh full of hopes and threats had changed the Raja's

friendly attitude towards Dara. Dara's request for a few days' refuge, so that he could attend his sick wife peacefully, was turned down by the Maharaja. He, however, kept Dara for two days and then escorted him across the frontier. Dara in the first week of May had reached the southern coast of Sind.

By then Khalilullah Khan had reached Bhakkar and barred Dara's route to the northern Sind. He had also despatched a force towards the east to close his route to Jaisalmir. Jai Singh had put the imperial officers of lower Sind on the alert.

After crossing the Cutch border Dara went towards Badin, but was informed on the way that it was occupied by the imperialist troops. He also got the information that Aurangeb's local officers and Jai Singh were converging on him from the north, east and south-east. He was left with only one way of escape and that was towards the north-west. He crossed the Indus and went towards Sehwan, intending to flee towards Persia, by way of Kandhar When Dara was crossing the Indus, Feruz Miwati left him as he found it fruitless to accompany him any more. Probably he also didn't reconcile with the idea of going with him to Kandhar and fight for his hopelessly lost cause. He deserted him and went away to join Aurangzeb.

Dara's pursuers also suffered great hardships on the way. When Jai Singh with his troops reached Bhuj, he found the Rao of Cutch turned unfriendly. He refused to provide a guide beyond the salt marsh. One of his relations accompanied the imperial general to this place and after that the army suffered from the greatest hazards of hunger nd thirst. At one place the army came across a few wells and what with difficulty they could take out was some water mixed with mud, which they drank Because of intense heat, thirst and diseases of intestines, many of the soldiers died. Near the greater Rann, the troops got the information of a few wells at a distance of some ten miles. A party of horsemen was sent to bring water, but only a few could get there to quench their thirst.

The army crossed the greater Rann near the village of Luna, where the Rann was seventy miles in breadth without a drop of

drinking water. After traversing about eighty miles, when the pursuing troops reached the village of Rehman, they were in a pitiable plight. Men jumped into the dirty water tanks and muddy nullahs and drank up the putrid water. By this time Raja Jai Singh's cavalry had been reduced to one-fourth. Bahadur Khan had met a similar fate. Both the forces were left practically unfit to continue the operation and Aurangzeb had to send money and reinforcements to his tired commanders. Jai Singh felt rightly proud in crossing the Rann of Cutch, which had never been traversed by the Mughal armies. It was a military wonder of those days. But he had to pay a heavy price for it. On account of scarcity of water and dearth of food, his soldiers suffered heavily; many of them perished and the animals died in large numbers. Because of tired men and animals he could not cover more than eight to ten miles a day. On 1 May, Jai Singh reached near Rahim Ki Bazar. On the way he bypassed Halla and reached Indus on 11 June.

On his arrival near Sehwan, he learnt that Dara had left the city with the intention of fleeing to Kandhar. Probably broken down with fatigue and seeing the deplorable condition of his troops who had toiled with him through the deserts and marshes of Sind, he sent a lettter to Aurangzeb, requesting permission for his return to the court. The letter read thus: "When appointing me to this service your Majesty had told me that so long as Dara was not captured or killed, or did not quit the Empire, I should not withdraw my hand from him. I have left no means untried to accomplish the first two alternatives. I have at no place, however hard and difficult to traverse, taken thought of the scracity of water and grain or of the predominance of lawless men. But God ordains everything, and so the third alternative has come to pass. As your Majesty has been freed from the mischief of the enemy, I beg to submit that in view of the extreme privations borne by the army and the weakness of the horses and transport cattle, which have not strength enough to move more than six or eight miles a day—I should be recalled to the court."

Jai Singh with his worn-out troops turned towards the north and started moving slowly towards Bhakkar.

Dara had left behind some ladies, two grandsons and part of his treasure and precious stores in the fort of Bhakkar. The fort was gallantly holding out under Primavera, the garrison commander, eunuch Basant and Manucci. The island of Bhakkar was 975 paces long and 553 paces broad. In the middle was a tower overlooking both the banks of the river. On the west lay Sukkur, on the east Rohri and towards the north there was the small island of Khwaja Khizer. In the fortress there was plenty of artillery and munition of war, besides a considerable quantity of gold, silver and precious stores. The attack on the fort began with two batteries mounted with cannons doing great damage. But Dara's artillery-men under Manucci stoutly replied and, under cover of their own artillery, sallied forth, rushing into the enemy's trenches, killing and destroying all they found there.

The enemy found it impossible to overcome such gallant foes by force of arms. So they shot arrows in the fortress with letters attached to them in which the European artillery-men were invited to abandon the service of Dara. One nigth one of the arrows hit Manucci on the shoulder while he was sitting in his bastion. He took the arrow to the commandant of the fort who rewarded him for his fidelity. The siege went on and the besieged garrison was in sore straits. Food became so scarce that Manucci bought two calves for six hundred rupees, paid thirteen rupees for a chicken and an ounce of butter cost one rupee. Aurangzeb's governor Khalilullah Khan made further overtures to the Bhakkar garrison who got so enraged that they decided to teach him a lesson. A letter was written to Khalilullah Khan by Primavera, the commandant of the garrison, that the desired agreement would be entered into if Khalilullah Khan himself came down from Lahore. Overjoyed at this outward weakening of the Bhakkar force, Khalilullah Khan hurried down to Bhakkar and sent a very polite letter to Primavera. But this brave and loyal commander ordered Manucci to load a cannon up to the very muzzle with horns, old shoes and such other rubbish. A letter was also sent

to Khalilullah Khan to this effect : "I hold a few words with you, for I am greatly amazed at you. And I hope to supply your want, having been all your life a pimp and used to shoe-beatings from women. Here with what you deserve, I offer you a present proportioned to your merits."

When it seemed that Khalilullah Khan must be reading the letter in his camp, Manucci was told to fire the gun, covering the enemy's tent with the charge it contained. For forty days more after this incident the siege went on. In the meantime Dara had been captured and the garrison was left with no cause to fight for.

Chapter 22

DARA'S CAPTURE

The pathetic story of Dara's capture is a lesson for the coming generations—an eye-opener for those who expect reward from others in return for their gratitudes and obligations, a heinous act of fraud and treachery that rarely finds its equal in the pages of history, the story of a comrade, who betrayed. He was Malik Jiwan, an Afghan chieftain and landlord of Dadar, a place nine miles away from the Bolan Pass.

Once Malik Jiwan, having shown signs of rebellion against the State, was defeated by the imperial commander and, bound in chains, was taken to Delhi, where Shah Jehan sentenced him to be trampled to death by an elephant. Dara, then at the height of power and a favourite of his father, was persuaded by one of the nobles to save Jiwan's life. Dara prevailed upon his father to forgive the offender and spare his life. He also intervened to get his entire land and property restored.

When Malik Jiwan was unchained and set free he prayed for an audience with the crown prince. He appeared before Dara and fell down upon his feet and wept—having no words to express his gratitude.

The fugitive prince with his retinue had crossed Sind and was passing through the wilderness of Baluchistan, when he was attacked and plundered by the Chandi tribe. He could escape death only by giving a brave and desperate fight. The party was well received by the Maghasi tribe and the chief promised to provide an escort who would go with them up to the frontier of Kandhar. From there Kandhar was only twelve marches off. But his womenfolk had again refused to leave the soil of Hindustan

and expose themselves to the savage Baluchis who barred their way.

Nadira Banu, the beloved wife of Dara Shikoh, was seriously ill and was unable to undertake any more journey. After the fatigue and hardship of two and a half months' ceaseless flight through the desert and salt marsh in summer heat, the other members of the party were also in a bad need of rest.

Dara still had hope to make a stand against Aurangzeb on the soil of India. His plan was to get the aid of some friendly Baluch chieftain, relieve the fort of Bhakkar which was still holding out against Aurangzeb's forces, leave his treasure and womenfolk in that island fort and march towards Afghanistan; there, after subduing the imperial governor of Afghanistan, to raise a fresh army and march back to contest the throne of Delhi.

Dara, as usual, changed his mind and, instead of going to Kandhar, set upon finding a friendly chief who would not only give shelter but also provide him the necessary military aid. His choice fell upon Malik Jiwan, the landlord of Dadar, who had once touched his feet and wept to express his gratitude. He sent him a message, giving advance notice of his coming. Jiwan sent an escort to guide the prince with his party and went himself two miles from the fort to welcome the honoured guest.

While on his way to Dadar, Dara met the greatest misfortune of his life. His wife who had been suffering from diarrhoea, and whose tender bodily constitution could no longer bear the strain of exile and continuous journey, succumbed to harships. This princess of the royal blood, the grand-daughter of Emperor Akbar, had borne terrible hardships with her husband and accompanied him through very difficult situations presented by the enemy, scarcity of food and water, bad weather and terrain. This lady, who from her childhood had not even known of such a dirty nomadic life, had borne it with great courage and patience. Although her early death and the murder of her husband and children obscured her greatness and made her name extinct from

the pages of history, yet her sacrifice and devotion towards her husband in the days of crises, made her supreme amongst the female descendants of Emperor Babur. Dara was frantic with grief at the loss of his constant companion and counsellor in weal and adversity. The eye-witness account of the extent of Dara's grief is recorded thus : "The world grew dark in his eyes. He was utterly bewildered. His judgement and prudence were entirely gone. Death was painted in his eyes. He became helpless and weak through intense grief. Everywhere he saw only destruction (staring him in the face), and losing his senses became utterly heedless of his own affairs."

Escorting the coffin of his wife, Dara with his party marched on towards Dadar, till he was received with all respects two miles away from the fort by Malik Jiwan. Dara's son and followers warned him not to enter Jiwan's house and to hasten towards Kandhar. But he insisted on spending there three days of mourning. His wife's last wish was that her body should be buried in the soil of India. So after two days he sent her body to Lahore to be buried in the graveyard of Saint Mian Mir. His trusted eunuch Khwaja Maqbul was detailed to accompany the coffin with an escort of seventy troopers under Gul Mohammad.

Probably his sending away his most devoted officer, Gul Mohammad, and all the seventy faithful soldiers still with him, was his last act of folly and a serious strategical blunder. And also in this desperate state of mind he left it to the discretion of the rest of his companions to return to their homes or to accompany him to Persia. At this all his trusted lieutenants left him and he was left with not a single soldier of his own. This state of affairs made his position absolutely hopeless and he became entirely dependent upon the mercy of his host.

After staying there for three days Dara left for Kandhar on 9 June 1659. He had not gone far when he saw a large force under Malik Jiwan following him. The treacherous Afghan surrounded the fugitives with his tribesmen. Dara with the few of his men could not offer resistance. Siphir Shikoh, however,

struck some blows, but he was soon overpowered and his arms were tied behind his back. Malik Jiwan ordered his men to drag back the party and shut them in the fort prison. Thus he rewarded the man who once had saved his life and got him restored his lost honour and property. The greed of rank and the hope of reward from Aurangzeb made his conduct very disgraceful. He sent fast coutiers with the news of Dara's capture to the imperial commanders, who were not very far. Bahadur Khan at once quickened his speed and after forced marches reached Dadar to take charge of the rich prize. Malik Jiwan handed over Dara, his son, two daughters and the rest of the party to Bahadur Khan on 23 June 1659. It is said that on this occasion this unfortunate prince looked shocked and speechless and consented to everything that his captors wanted. Bahadur Khan made him to write a letter to Primavera, the commander of Bhakkar fort, to surrender, which he did and the fort surrendered.

Jai Singh joined Bahadur Khan on the way and the two imperial generals with the captives began their return march to Delhi. After two months of journey through deserts and jungles they reached Delhi on 23 August 1659.

Chapter 23

MURDER OF THE MIGHTY PRINCE

In Delhi this unfortunate prince and his son were handed over to Nazarbeg, who got them locked in a fort dungeon. Nazarbeg was an ugly and merciless man, who was employed as an executioner. Aurangzeb then ordered the captives to be paraded through the streets of Delhi, so that people should see him with their own eyes and in future nobody in his name might raise the standard of rebellion in other provinces.

The humiliating parade was held on 29 August and the incident left deep and lasting marks of resentment and hatred on the minds of the people against their government. Dara and his son were made to wear dirty coarse clothes and dark-coloured turbans. They were seated in a broken and uncovered hawdah on the back of a small female elephant. This pigmy elephant was covered with dirt and ashes. Behind them sat Nazarbeg, their executioner, with a sword in his hand. Dara Shikoh, once the crown prince and heir to the richest throne of the world—the beloved son of Shah Jehan, the great alms-giver, loved by his people for his lavish charity, generosity and acts of mercy—was taken in procession in this wretched state through the scenes of his former glory and splendour. He was sitting silent and shocked with his feet chained and head bowed. He did not cast his glance on either side, but once only when a poor beggar passing him near by cried out, "Oh Dara ! when you were master, you always gave me alms; today I know well you can't give." These words of the beggar touched his heart, he looked at him with the eyes that had lost the expression, and then raising his hand to his shoulder, took off the course wrapper and threw it to the beggar.

The people of Delhi thronged the roadsides, from where this degraded procession had to pass. An eye-witness account by Bernier reads thus : "The crowd assembled was immense ; and everywhere the people weeping and lamenting the fate of Dara in the most touching language . . . . From every quarter I heard piercing and distressing shrieks, . . . men, women and children wailing as if some mighty calamity had happened to themselves."

But nobody dared come near Dara to express grief and sympathy, the prisoner being escorted by strong bands of cavalry and musketeers. One of the cavalry squadrons was being led by Malik Jiwan and he was galloping ahead of his horsemen with great pride, probably trying to show off that he was the actual hero of that drama. The procession was being led by Bahadur Khan, sitting in a costly howdah on a caparisoned elephant. The procession entered Shahjehanabad through Lahore gate, then passed through Chandni Chawk—by the side of the fort—Khizirabad to the old city of Delhi. There Dara and his son were imprisoned in Khawaspura mansion.

Aurangzeb held a court that evening with a view to deciding Dara's fate. Danishmand Khan, an elderly courtier, pleaded for his life, but Shaista Khan, Bahadur Khan and some other courtiers strongly recommended Dara's execution for the good of the State and religion. The vote of Princess Roshan Ara, the younger sister of Aurangzeb, who had upheld his cause in the court of Shah Jehan, decided the issue. She strongly objected to any appeal of mercy for Dara Shikoh and pleaded that he should be beheaded. The court theologians signed a decree that Dara deserved death for his infidelity and deviation from the Islamic laws. Dara's friends tried their utmost to save his life through mediators, but in vain.

That night Dara sent a letter to his brother beseeching mercy. He wrote, "My master brother and emperor, I am left with no desire to become a king. May God bless you with that status and honour. Your decision to kill me is unjust. In the name of God, the most merciful, I pray you to spare my life and the lives of my

children. If you only allow me to live in a house with a young handmaid out of my own handmaids to wait on me I shall pray for your good in the rest of my life." Aurangzeb read the letter and put these words on the margin : "First you acted as a usurper and then you created mischief."

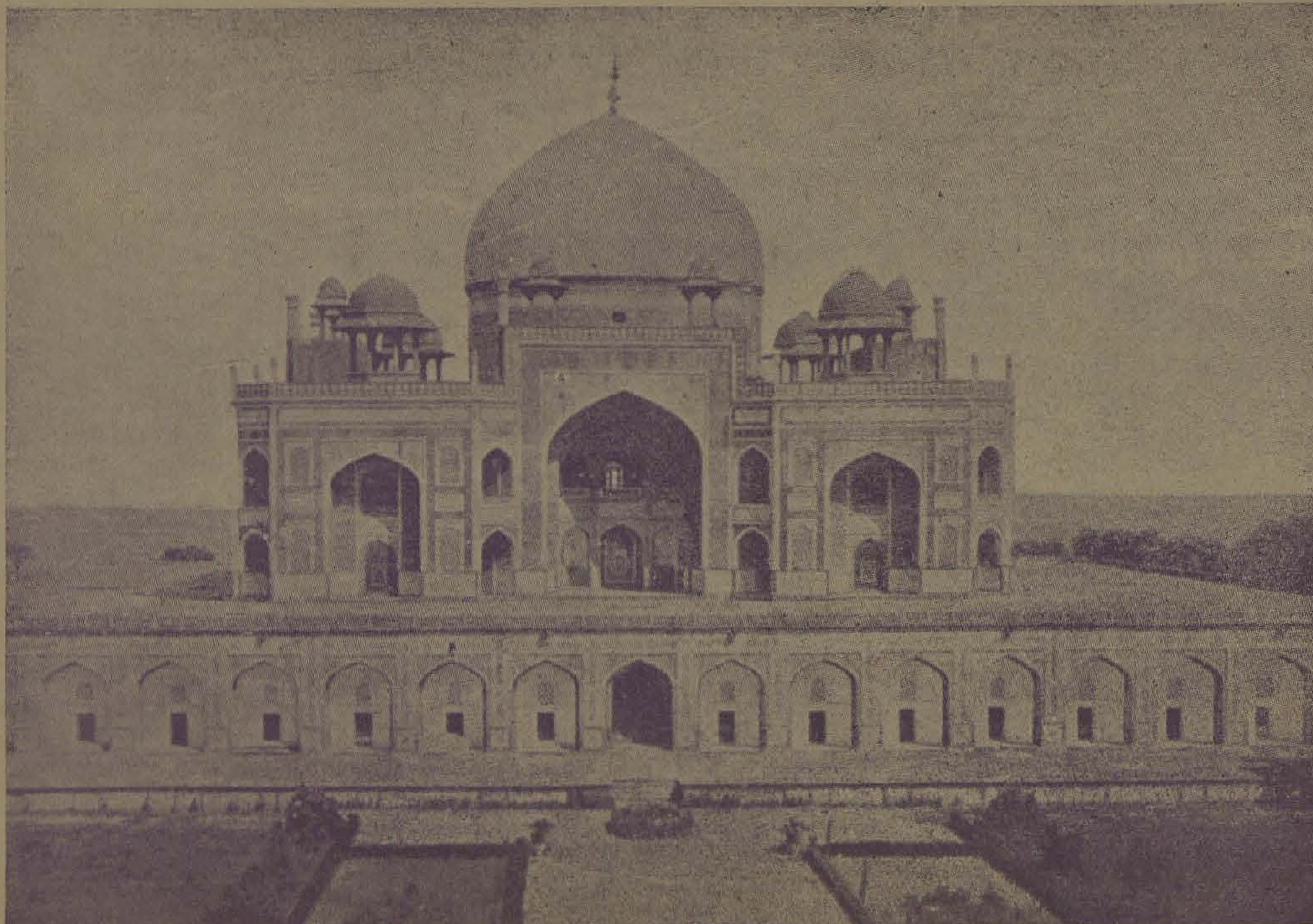
Aurangzeb had no pity for Dara, for the latter in the last sixteen years had left no stone unturned in annoying him. Dara had thwarted his plans and backbit him in the imperial court. He had influenced his father, Shah Jehan, and at times deprived Aurangzeb of his father's favours. When Aurangzeb was on war against Bijapur and Golconda, Dara had openly intrigued against him. The enemies of Aurangzeb used to get easy asylum and protection with Dara. At times Dara's senior officers insulted Aurangzeb and got away without even a rebuke from their master. Shah Jehan would bestow favours on the sons of Dara Shikoh, but Aurangzeb's children were never considered worthy of that honour. Aurangzeb had borne all this with patience and he could not forgive his brother for all this.

The bloody riot that occurred on 30 August in the streets of Delhi precipitated the end of Dara. The people of Delhi had seen the traitor Malik Jiwan in the procession; but in the presence of armed troopers they could not properly give vent to their feelings against him, though at times the spectators did loudly abuse him and pelted stones at him. Next day when he was going to the court with his Afghan troops to get his reward from Aurangzeb as the price of his treachery, the people of Delhi, inspired by Haibat, an officer of the imperial army, barred his way. Beggars, workers, shopkeepers and other admirers of Dara mobbed the party. Shouting abuses, pelting stones, and waving sticks they fell upon the Afghan party. The women threw bags of ashes and filth on Jiwan's party from the their houses-tops. Some of the citizens made use of knives and daggers, killing some and injuring others of Jiwan's companions. Had the traitor's party not been rescued by the prefect of the city police, no one amongst them could have escaped alive. It was only after a tough struggle with

the unruly mob that the police could extricate the newly-appointed Khan and lead him to a place of safety.

Aurangzeb was alarmed to hear about this riot in the very heart of the city and expected more. He failed in his desire to make Dara ridiculous before the public. Instead, its adversely affected the minds of the people and the situation in the city became very explosive. That made Aurangzeb to act in haste ; he, therefore, issued immediate orders for Dara's execution. Nazarbeg and other selected slaves were entrusted with the job under the general supervision of Saif Khan.

During the early hours of the night Nazarbeg and other slaves armed with daggers entered Dara's prison. Their plan was first to separate the son from the father and then to kill them. As they approached Dara, he got alarmed and excited as he could make out their motive. Pale and trembling with fear he approached them and, falling on his knees, cried, "Have you come to murder me?" They said that they had come only to take Siphir Shikoh to a separate room. The terror-stricken boy prince, also seeing death on their hideous features, came close to his father and knelt down. What a fate ! Once a commander of sixty thousand horse, the mighty prince of Asia, the soul of Emperor Shah Jehan, the life of the imperial court, Prince Dara Shikoh "Lord of the exalted fortune," whose hospitality had become a proverb and whose mercy was sought by the condemned both the of rich and the poor—was himself kneeling low with his child by his side in a helpless state—their dried eyes staring constantly at their gaolers, as if pleading for mercy. Nazarbeg pointing towards Siphir Shikoh bade him get up. In fear and despair Siphir started crying and clung to Dara's legs. Crying loudly the two hugged each other firmly. The slaves became more aggressive and forcibly separated father from son. At this Dara wiping his tears humbly requested the slaves to give his massage to his brother to leave Siphir Shikoh with him. But they replied rudely that they were not anybody's messengers. Then they fell upon the young prince and carried him away forcibly from his father's arms to the side room. Dara seeing



Tomb of Emperor Humayun, where the body of murdered prince Dara Shikoh was buried in secrecy in an unknown underground cellar.

death in face, prepared to make a last stand. He had hidden a pen knife in his pillow. He tore open the cover, took out the knife and attacked the slave who was advancing towards him with the bare dagger. The small blade was driven with such force into the slave's side that it got stuck in bones. Dara tried to extract it, but in vain. That moment the other slaves fell upon him plunging their sharp weapons into his body. Dara fought to the last, beating them with blows till he collapsed. From the other rooms Siphir Shikoh's wild shrieks were reaching the ears of his dying father. A moment later, it was all quiet.

The severed head of Dara was sent to Aurangzeb, for his satisfaction that his enemy was really dead. Aurangzeb ordered his corpse to be placed on an elephant and paraded through the streets of Delhi. The Emperor's order was carried through. The bloodstained and unwashed body of this unfortunate prince was once more taken out in a procession, paraded through the streets and then buried under a dome of Humayun's tomb. Besides his grave were the graves of two younger sons of Akbar.

Chapter 24

THE FALLEN CAUSE

Suleman Shikoh, the eldest son of Dara, was the only competent rival left to the throne. As mentioned earlier, he had been sent against Shuja by his father with a grand army and experienced generals like Jai Singh and Dilir Khan. In May 1658, while the young prince was busy in operations against his uncle Shuja near Mungir, he received summons from his father to return quickly to him, as Aurangzeb had defeated Jaswant Singh at Dharmet and was advancing on Agra. As Dara had instructed, peace was hastily made with Shuja and the imperial army set out on its return.

When Suleman with his troops reached Kora, one hundred and five miles west of Allahbad, a fast courtier brought to him the bad news of his father's defeat at Samugarh five days earlier. He also received a message from Shah Jehan urging him to make a rapid march and join his father at Delhi. The imperial generals accompanying Suleman also received urgent messages from Dara, with orders to waste no time and make forced marches to join him at Delhi. But the news of Dara's crushing defeat in Samugarh had changed the loyalty of his generals. The troops were in great excitement and they were distracted or openly hostile to the fallen cause. They knew that still they had to cover a long distance for reaching Delhi and that their route would be soon blocked by the victors. The bewildered prince took counsel with Jai Singh. He advised him either to march towards Delhi or to return to Allahbad and wait within its sheltering walls, for news of his father. The prince, during conversation with the Maharaja, found him a completely changed man. Jai Singh openly refused to side with him or to give any moral support to

the fallen cause. The prince then called his Afghan general Dilir Khan and asked his opinion. He advised him to fall back on Allahabad and then to Shahjehanpur, a city of Afghans, where he should raise an army and wait for further developments. The general told him that he would accompany him, if he accepted his advice. Suleman, finding no other way out, obeyed him. But in the meantime Jai Singh prevailed upon Dilir Khan and convinced him of his folly of such unselfish devotion. The two generals with their contingents left Suleman Shikoh at Kora to join the new emperor. Most of the imperial officers and troops deserted the prince and his grand army of 25,000 was reduced to 6000. The prince's guardian Baqi Beg kept by his side and accompanied him in retreat to Allahbad.

While the prince should have, with forced marches, reached to join his father, he wasted a week's time in fruitless conferences and consultations. Moreover, his large harem, costly furniture and other articles of pomp and show had badly affected his mobility. When he left Agra on his first campaign, his loving father and doting grandfather, besides sending under him the best generals and their selected troops, also bestowed on him gifts like couches of gold, chairs of gold and silver, jewellery, gold plates, rich clothing; his complete harem composed of two hundred ladies. In that difficult situation he could not carry them, nor did he desire to leave them behind. There were so many conflicting plans, till he decided to bypass Delhi, march by the northern side of the Ganges, then cross the Ganges and Jamuna near the hills of Nagina and Saharanpur and join his father in the Punjab. On this route he expected less interception by the enemy.

Suleman left the heavy baggage, surplus property and harem attendants in the Allahbad fort in charge of a trusted servant, Sayyid Qasim Barha, and with light baggage he resumed the journey. He reached Nagina, took possession of government treasury and tried to cross cover the Ganges towards its right bank. But he met with no success, because the men took their boats to the other side at the report or his approach. So, he

continued his journey and marched on towards Hardwar, where he hoped to cross the river with local help. But he was surprised to know that his path had been closed by strong forces of enemy. Aurangzeb had sent on 24 July 1658 strong contingents under Sheikh Mir and Dilir Khan to defend the right bank of the river Jamuna and not to let Suleman Shikoh cross the river. Now all the routes leading towards south and west were closed to the prince and his plan to join his father in the Punjab could not be materialised.

Hotly pursued by Shaista Khan and other imperial generals, the prince, to avoid capture, hastened his march towards Srinagar in search of asylum. His faithful servant and guardian Baqi Beg had died on the way. His death demoralised the troops and the men started deserting in large numbers ; the army strength was reduced to 2000. Utter despair and confusion overtook Suleman. He sent a message to the ruler of Garhwal, Maharaja Prithwi Singh, for asylum and himself marched to his frontier. Here the Maharaja's men met him and guided him into their territory. The Maharāja agreed to give him refuge in Srinagar, his capital, on condition that none except his family and a few servants should accompany him; his army and other followers were to be dismissed as the country was poor and there were no good roads. The prince hestitated to accept this condition as it would have left him utterly powerless and absolutely dependent on his host. But he was helpless. All his routes towards the Punjab were under strong vigil of the enemy. A strong force had been despatched to invest Allahabad and Aurangzeb had reached the Punjab in pursuit of Dara Shikoh. There was no way out but to accept the Raja's terms. Srinagar was still four marches ahead. Those of his followers who wanted to desert him, but were afraid of the Maharaja's fierce tribesmen guarding the hilly roads, advised Suleman not to entrust his life to the hillmen, but to return to Allahabad. To support their cause they showed him a forged letter, which, they pretended, was sent by his trusted servant, the commandant of Allahabad. The letter said that Shuja had come there with a vast army and was waiting for him. At this Suleman changed

his mind, thanked the Maharaja for his hospitality and marched back to Nagina. There the traitor's plan was made known to him. Most of them had fled away during the hours of darkness and the fugitive prince was left with barely one thousand men.

The prince became desperate when he discovered the real motive of his faithless advisers. The heart-broken prince made up his mind once again to return to Srinagar. On his way back to Srinagar, there were more desertions so that from one thousand his force was reduced to two hundred.

With this small retinue and means of transport, it was difficult to provide conveyance to and maintain such a big harem composed of two hundred ladies. The pursuers were getting closer and no time was to be lost in finding and employing new servants. He had to take the dreadful decision of giving the ladies of his harem away to anyone who cared to take them. His decision made the womenfolk frantic with grief. In utter despair they wept, plucked their hair and slapped their faces. These women, the selected ones, unique in personal grace and beauty, of Suleman Shikoh, the magnificent prince, son of the crown prince and grandson of Emperor Shah Jehan, were being left to their fate to pass the rest of their lives like destitutes. Some of the ladies went over to new masters, others were left by the roadside to find their own shelters. The ladies of the highest status, who were fortunate in still having their elephant drivers accompanied the prince.

The prince with barely two hundred followers continued the flight covering long distances every day, as the enemy was close behind. Qasim Khan, a landlord of Moradabad, reached Nagina eighteen hours late, and after learning of the prince's route went in his pursuit. The hardships on the way further reduced the prince's party, till he was left only with his wife, a few other ladies and fifteen soldiers. The Maharaja of Srinagar gave him asylum and promised to protect him from his enemies even at the cost of his own life.

The Maharaja accorded all respect and hospitality towards his honoured guest. He got the old ruined palace of his ancestors repaired and loged the prince there. He considered the arrival

of the prince in his land a God's blessing, as such an event had never happened before. He even gave his daughter in marriage to Suleman Shikoh, probably with the desire to mingle his blood with a descendant of Emperor Akbar.

Suleman could enjoy the Raja's hospitality hardly for a few years, when his host started getting threatening letters from Aurangzeb, warning him of utter ruin, if he did not yield the fugitive. Prithwi Singh tried his best to evade the issue, and even lied before the Emperor's messenger that the prince had found an asylum in a neighbouring hill state and was not in Garhwal. But it was not an easy affair to deceive Aurangzeb, who after subduing all his rivals had turned to Suleman Shikoh.

In July 1659 Aurangzeb sent Raja Rajrup of Jammu hills with imperial troops to persuade Prithwi Singh to surrender the prince. He was instructed to use force if the Maharaja refused to accept his demand. Raja Rajrup made use of all forms of diplomacy and even tempted Prithwi Singh of his rise to a high status and rewards from the Emperor, but in vain. Then he became aggressive and started attacking and plundering the Raja's territory. Prithwi Singh repulsed all these attacks with heavy losses. In October 1660 Aurangzeb sent further reinforcements and artillery to Raja Rajrup and sent him orders to reorganise his army and restart the offensive. But again the imperialists met with no success, because their artillery and conventional ways of fighting proved ineffective against the hill warriors who made use of guerilla tactics in the rugged hills of Garhwal.

The failure of armed might made Aurangzeb to fall back on diplomacy. He succeeded in winning over Prithwi Singh's prime minister with the promise of his master's throne if he managed to kill Suleman Shikoh or brought about his capture. The greed of his master's throne made this man plan to administer some poisoned medicine to the prince. Suleman being always alert in his adverse days experimented the medicine on a cat. The cat died instantly. He informed the Maharaja about the incident. Enraged, the Maharaja called the minister and with one stroke of his sword killed him.

Chapter 25

THE END OF SULEMAN SHIKOH

When all other plans failed to recover the prince, Aurangzeb employed Jai Singh, an expert in intrigues with Hindu princes. Jai Singh sent a message to Prithwi Singh, saying that he did not want to see the ruin of a Hindu chief. He professed friendship for him and pointed out the folly of defying Aurangzeb and the certainty of utter destruction as its result if he did not give up Suleman Shikoh. But his message fell like water on the oily stone. The honoured host was not prepared to surrender his guest at any cost. He was old and his conscience did not allow him to commit the sin of betraying the man who took refuge with him.

Unfortunately, Prithwi's son and heir, Medni Singh, was not a man of word like him. He had also been intrigued by Raja Jai Singh, who had promised him a high reward if he could prevail upon his father to give up the prince.

In the meantime the imperial army, led by three generals, after capturing Maharaja's outposts were converging on Srinagar. The Mughal commanders were also instigating the rival rulers in the neighbourhood to invade Garhwal. Seeing the state going out of their hands, Medni overruled his father and decided to hand over Suleman to his enemies. He sent a polite and submissive reply to Jai Singh promising to obey his orders.

Aurangzeb sent Kumar Ram Sing, son of Jai Singh, to bring the prince. Suleman Shikoh, who had come to know of Medni's plot, tried to escape over to Ladakh. But he was soon overtaken by Medni's troops, to whom he gave tough resistance. In this struggle most of his companions were slain, and he himself was seriously injured. On 27 December 1959 he was despatched

with an escort, and delivered to Kumar Ram Singh. The Rajput prince, proud in his achievement of procuring the most precious prize, the son of Dara Shikoh, put him in chains and took him to Delhi.

It is hard to visualise the extent of grief of Suleman during his journey as a captive under Kumar Ram Singh, escorted by his Rajput contingent. His captor's father, Raja, Jai Singh, was once his most loyal and efficient general—who would bow before him in homage, uttering the words, "Long live the magnificent prince, the respected son of Dara Shikoh, the Lord of exalted fortune, the heir to the throne of Hindustan." His father had bestowed such honours and awards on his family and promoted his sons and relations to such high status. But, his son Ram Singh with his Rajput contingent—who was once his trusted lieutenant and whose troops his trusted men—was taking him in chains to Delhi before his uncle, who had no mercy for him. His doting father and loving mother, his younger brother whom he liked so much, his wives, concubines and maid-servants—his troops and attendants—his home with all the pomp and show it had, hardly a year before—it was all a forgotten story. The doomed prince was brought to Delhi in January 1661 and locked in the fort prison of Salimgarh.

After a few days the prince was led in chains before Aurangzeb in the hall of private audience of the Delhi palace. The prince was in a pitiable state. His wounds were not yet healed, his clothes and shoes were torn, and the effects of fatigue and sickness were apparent on his face. In his father's days he was very popular amongst the courtiers and nobles, because of his youth, beauty, martial fame and high morals. His appearance in such a miserable state at a place of his former glory and splendour moved the courtiers and most of them wept. Bernier gives an eye-witness account: "Many of the courtiers on seeing the prince in that condition shed tears. The principal ladies of the royal house, who were seeing him from behind the lattice-work, were also weeping. Aurangzeb addressed him kindly and

said, "Do not fear ; no harm shall befall you. You will be treated with all care and kindness. God is great and most merciful, and you should put your faith in Him. Dara, your father, had to die, because of his infidelity."

The prince was sent to the fort prison of Gwalior on 15 January 1661 and was treated with "Pousta," crushed poppy-seed drink. Because of his immense strength and vitality, this young man of sturdy constitution could struggle longer with life than other ill-fated princes and lingered on for more than a year. In May 1662, this magnificent prince, the most favoured grandson of Shah Jehan, who might, under favourable conditions, have adorned the throne of Delhi, died in a miserable state at the age of thirty. He was buried on the Gwalior hill.

DISCOURSE WITH A YOGI

Prince Dara Shikoh met Baba Lal, a Hindu Yogi and held discourses with him. Baba Lal belonged to the order of Kabir. It is said that he was a 'Khattri,' by caste and belonged to Kasur. Dara Shikoh writes that Baba Lal told him, "Be not a Shaikh, be not a saint, be not a wielder of miracles. Be rather a 'Faqir'—unpretentious and sincere."

The prince met Baba Lal in Lahore in 1653. Seven discourses were held between the prince and the Yogi in Lahore. The discourses were composed in Hindi, but were later translated under the title "Nadir-un-Nikat" by Rai Chander Bhan. Rai Chander Bhan was Dara's "mir munshi." He was a scholar in Persian and a poet. During the prince's discourses with the Yogi he acted as an interpreter, because Baba Lal spoke in Sanskrit. Later Chander Bhan translated the discourses into Persian. These discourses have been published in many languages. A text of the discourses with French translation was published in *The Journal Asiatique*. The extracts of the dialogues are given below :

On the Hindu Conception of Nada and Veda.

Dara Shikoh : How can one differentiate between the Nada and the Veda ?

Baba Lal : As in the case of a king and his command : the king constitutes the Nada and the Veda his command.

On Idol-worship among the Hindus.

Dara Shikoh : What is the significance of idol-worship among the people of India and who has enjoined upon its practice?

Baba Lal : The whole spirit of the practice is for the concentration of mind. One who possesses the knowledge of the spirit does not concern about the form : but, whosoever is devoid of inner consciousness must, therefore, attach himself to external form. Small unmarried girls play with dolls, but when they get

married they do not concern themselves with them. Such is the case of idol-worship. Those who do not possess knowledge of the spirit would certainly strive for its acquisition, through the medium of the form ; but as soon as they gain inner consciousness, they would discard the form.

What is Kashi ? Is it conformation in life ?

Dara Shikoh : It is recorded in the Hindu scriptures that whosoever dies at Kashi, as a matter of course, attains salvation. It is an extraordinory phenomenon ! Would it not make the pious and the sinner stand on equal footing ?

Baba Lal : As a matter of fact, Kashi symbolically signifies real existence (*wujud*) and whosoever perishes in existence attains salvation.

Dara Shikoh : Since everyone perishes in real existence, does it mean that all who die attain *mukti* (salvation) ?

Baba Lal : None except the *Saintete-unitive* dies in existence. Humanity dies of passion which is quite distinguishable from real existence. Passion multiplies anon : and under its subjection one is ever deprived of the *mukti*.

Hindu Mythology

Dara Shikoh : It is evidently recorded in the *Ramayana* that when Ram Chandra conquered Lanka (Ceylon), a large number of people on either side were slain. Thereafter he sprinkled elixir on the dead with the result that the whole of his own army was brought to life, but the fallen army of Ravana which was also annihilated did not resurrect. Knowing well the established properties of elixir—when sprinkled over the dead, it brings them back to life—how can we account for this ?

Baba Lal : This was due to the fact that at the battlefield Ravana's host had ever the thought of Rama uppermost in their minds. The advantage is evident, that with genuine contemplation, men of piety who attain *mukti* never return to bodily confinement. Since they had been slain on the battlefield and, prior to their death, they had the thought of Rama ever present in their minds, the army of Ravana attained salvation and did not return again

to bodily confinement.

Dara Shikoh : How is it that Sita after being abducted by Ravana was left unmolested ?

Baba Lal : Sita in reality was the *Dharma*, and as such, it had no relative affinity with the Satan.

Dara Shikoh : Since "Satan" could assume the physical form of anyone, why did he not become Rama Chandra ?

Baba Lal : Sita loved Rama Chandra's form, but could not be afflicted by Ravana, when he came in his own form. The characteristics of Rama had so much ingrained within her that she could have discerned the figure of Rama in whatever form it appeared.

Dara Shikoh : Does the recitation of the sacred syllable *Om* lead one to heaven (*Swarga*) ?

Baba Lal : The syllable *Om* is the best among all the syllables. and the effect of its recitation is as such. This statement is true in the case of one who can distinguish between things genuine and counterfeit—though both may bear a uniform stamp—and whose knowledge is pure and unpolluted.

Dara Shikoh : According to Hindu religious conception, Sri Krishna appeared in his true form before the *gopis* at Brajdham. Can that form be seen by human eyes ?

Baba Lal : To those who are attached to worldly affairs, this bodyless form is not visible : it is visible only to *faqirs* and *sadhus*, who have repressed physical carnal passions and who know how to keep their emotions in check, but, at the same time, do not exterminate them in order that their minds may not go astray.

Dara Shikoh : It is recorded in Persian works that God Almighty has created man out of the four elements (earth, water, fire and air) but according to Indian conception man is created out of five elements (*panchabhuta*). What is the fifth element ?

Baba Lal : The fifth element is the *Akasa*, which is named *Saravan-Sakti* (power of hearing) and through which one can feel good and evil. *Saravan-Sakti* draws one towards the Almighty.

Dara Shikoh : In what state can a *faqir* be said to be

detached from the mundane world ?

Baba Lal : Every living being always eats, drinks, sees, hears and rests. In these matters they are helplessly tied, but one who does these things without being attached to them and who can remain unperturbed even in case of lack of food, etc., may be said to be free from mundane attachments.

What is Mind ?

Dara Shikoh : What is the significance of mind ?

Baba Lal : By saying : "My wind and yours." The mind attracts our souls towards mother, father, brother and women and falls in love. It should be known that the love of duality is through mind.

Dara Shikoh : What is the shape of mind which is invisible ?

Baba Lal : It is like the wind.

Dara Shikoh : How is it ?

Baba Lal : As the wind uproots the trees but is invisible, in the same way, mind though it exits in reality, is not visible when it accelerates the five senses. It should, therefore, be presumed that the shape of mind is like the wind.

Dara Shikoh : What are its functions ?

Baba Lal : It is a go-between of the souls.

Dara Shikoh : How ?

Baba Lal : The shop of five senses whom the Indians term the *Indriyanis* stock physical pleasures and communicate them to the souls, with the result that the latter become entangled in sinful sensuality. Since mind acts as an agent in procuring the commodity from the shop for the buyer, it receives its commission and stands aloof, while the buyer and the seller respectively stand to loose or gain in the bargain. In this manner the mind is a go-between of souls. This is its correct estimate.

The Creator and the Created.

Dara Shikoh : How can one differentiate between the Creator (*Khaliq*) and the Created (*Makhluq*) ? I inquired of a man and he replied, "Like the tree and its seed." Is this true or otherwise ?

Baba Lal : The Creator is like an ocean and the Created like

a clay-jug full of its water. Notwithstanding the uniformity of the water with that of the ocean, the jug gives it a different shape. Such is the difference between the Creator and the Created.

On Human Soul and Divine Soul.

Dara Shikoh: How can the *Paramatman* become the *Jivatma* and how does it finally return to its original form?

Baba Lal : In the manner of water in wine—the latter when poured over earth leaves on its surface all intoxicating and alcoholic ingredients and what is absorbed in the soil is again water. In the same way human beings endowed with individual soul, when they shake off the existent "intoxication" of the five senses, become one with the Divine Soul.

On Sleep

Dara Shikoh : What is that sleep which the Indian calls as *Nindra*?

Baba Lal : Sleep—it is both the slumber and awakening in pursuit of worldly covetousness. The real awakening dawn at the cessation of all ideas of worldly possessions (*ma-o-mani*). Love never dies out in the minds of the divines ; they ever die (sleep) in it and they ever rise with it.

Dara Shikoh : What is the sleep of the divine ?

Baba Lal : His renunciation of all worldly desires and freedom from all personal possessions. In his sleep he dreams not of any material objects. Perhaps in the Indian *Yoga*, the divines are themselves called the *Nindra*, as they are above worldly slumbers and awakenings.

APPENDIX

The translation of a few selected quatrains of Dara Shikoh appeared in Chapter 8 of this book. The original version is reproduced below:—

1 یک ذره ندیدیم ز خورشید جدا
هر قطرهٔ آب هست عین دریا
حق را بچه نام کس تواند خواندن
هر نام که هست ، هست از اسماء خدا

2 آنانکه خدا دران زمان می بینند
اول تو بدان درین جهان می بینند
دید ار خدا درین و آن یکسان است
هر لحظه به ظاهر و نهان می بینند

3 تسبیح بمن عجب در آمد بزبان
گفته که مرا چرا کنی سر گردان
گر دل بعوض همی بگردانی تو
دانی که برائے چیست خلق انسان

4 'کافر' گفتی تو از بۓ آزرام
این حرفِ ترا راست همی پندارم
پستی و بلندی همه شد هموارم
من مذهب هفتاد و دو ملت دارم

5 توحید خموشی است و فکر است مدام
بحث آمد و شد ز دست توحید تمام
یک گفتن تو عین دوئی ثابت کرد
توحید رود زنقطه چون گیری نام

6 او در نظر است رو بهر چیز کنی
کوری ، تو چرا بخویش تجویز کنی
حق گفت چو 'اینما تولّوا' با تو
باید که نظر به سوئے خود نیز کنی

7 هر چند که نیست سایه از ذات جدا
لیکن نبود سایهٔ شه غیر نها
دانم چو بگویند مرا سایهٔ حق
ترسم که ازین دوئی بد آید حق را

8 اے آنکه خدائے را بجوئی هر جا
تو عین خدائی نه جدائی ز خدا
این جستن تو همین بآن می ماند
قطره بمیان آب و جوید دریا

عارف دل و جان تو مزیّن سازد
خاری که کند بجاش گلشن سازد
کامل همه را ز نقص بیرون آرد
یک شمع هزار شمع روشن سازد

10 بیرون و درون کوزه پر بود هوا
پیچیده درون کوزه آواز و صدا
کوزه بشکست و گشت آواز آواز
بشکست حباب و گشت عین دریا

11 خوش گرچه بیاد خود نشستن همه وقت
این قید چه لازم است برمن همه وقت
غافل شدن خلق ز حق از حق است
خود را تعب است یاد کردن همه وقت

12 هر گز نکند آب حجاب اندر یخ
با آنکه کند نقش حباب اندر یخ
حق بحر حقیقت است و کونین درو
چون یخ بمیان آب و آب اندر یخ

13 هیچ کسے مرا نباید سنجید
من زانچه گفته ام نباید رنجید
هر چند که چار بچه زاید بلبل
بلبل بچهٔ کلاں به بلبل گردید

14 خواهی که شوی داخل ارباب نظر
از قال به حال بایدت کرد گزر
از گفتن توحید موحد نشوی
شیرین نشود دهان ز نام شکر

15 گویم سخنے ز روۓ تحقیق و صواب
گر سرد رهی، قبول کن، روۓ متاب
هر گز بنود صفات بر ذات حجاب
کے نقش بر آب مانع است از مس آب

16 هستی و وجود خودم کردم رد
گردید مساویم همه نیک و بد
اکنون انتوان نام خود و نامش برد
گرنام بگیرم زمن او می رنجد

17 توحید بگویم ار بفهمی به ادا
موجود نبود هیچ گه غیر خدا
آنها که تو می بینی و می دانی غیر
در ذات یکیست در نام جدا

18 هر چند نقاب درمیان دارد یار
رویش خوش و خوب می نماید بسیار
چوں عینک تو بود نقاب رخ یار
عینک نکند به پیش چشم تو غبار

19 دریاست و جود صرف ذات وهاب
ارواح و نقوش همچو نقش اندر آب
بحریست که موج می زند اندر خود
گه قطره، گه است موج، گاهیست حباب

20 هر چند که خلق را گرفته کولی
غفلت شده است برهمه مستولی
مشغول بحق است بفهمد یا نه
هر کس که بهر چیز شده مشغولی

21 توحید شناخت ، هر کرا حالی نیست
در راه طلب همت او عالی نیست
خوشی آنکه میان خویش حق را بشناخت
او در همه جاست هیچ جا خالی نیست

22 ز ابلیس به بوالبشرچه انکار رسید
حق گفت حسین ، بر سر دار رسید
از شومیٔ شرنفس ملایان است
با هر نبی و ولی که آزار رسید

23 هر دم بر سد بعارفان ذوق جدید
خود بتهد اند نے ز اهل تقلید
شیران نخورند جز شکار خود را
روباه خورد فتادهٔ لحم قدید

24 هر کار که مشکل است درویش کند
مرهم به دمی نهد که او ریش کند
و اصل چو شود تصرفش افزاید
شمشیر برهنه کار رابیش کند

25 در هجر تو بوده الده و آزارم
از وصل تو رفت هستی و پندارم
شادی آمد نصیب جانم گردید
اکنون تن وجان خود به راحت دارم

26 اے که از نام توئی بارد عشق
و نامه و پیغام توئی بارد عشق
عاشق گردد هر که بکویت گزرد
آری ز در و بام توئی بارد عشق

Chapter 27

THE LAST PHASE

Dara had been killed and his severed head along with the body was buried under an unknown dome of Humayun's tomb. The mark of his grave never existed. The members of his family with the exception of a few had died of disease or exhaustion, poisoned or murdered. His retainers and comrades-in-arms were mostly killed, others deserted and joined the winning side. Those who loved him did not leave him even in the worst situation. Thousands had laid down their lives for him in the battles of Dharmat, Samugarh, Deorai and perished in the difficult terrain of Sind and the Rann of Kutch.

Dara's faithfuls had waylaid and killed Malik Jiwan on the return journey to his state. The costly robe of honour and wealth that he had received from the Mughal court as award for betraying Dara Shikoh were siezed by his goalers and his body was cut to pieces. This is the reward of treachery which nature has always bestowed on those in the long run who betrayed.

However some interesting incidents of loyalty and devotion, which occurred during this period of chaos and bloodshed need to be mentioned. When Raja Jaswant Singh was defeated in the battle of Dharmat and retreated to his state (Jodhpur), his Rani ordered the gates of the fort to be closed and refused to let him in. Doctor Bernier (Shah Jehan's court physician) writes in his memoirs that when Rani heard of Raja's retreat and his return to Jodhpur, she openely displayed her wrath against her husband. She said furiously : "Close the gates of the fort. I will not allow such a shameless man to enter the fort. Such

a man . . . . and my husband ! . . . . my father's son-in-law . . . .! and such a shameless man. I do not want to see his face. A man who is related to the great Rana (her father) should follow his deeds of valour and if he cannot conquer, he should die a martyr's death." Then she ordered a 'Chita' or burning pyre to be lit, because she said that her husband had died. When she was preparing for the last ceremony, her mother intervened and succeeded in convincing her that the Raja had not deserted the battlefield cowardly, but had returned to reorganise his army for renewing the offensive against Aurangzeb.

More than his generals, soldiers, retainers and attendants, his wives and mistresses were deeply attached and devoted towards him, "because the prince," as Mannuci writes, "was a person of dignified manners, a comely countenance, joyous, polite in conversation, of most extraordinary liberality, kindly and compassionate."

Mannuci who was a venetian, landed in Surat and took service as an artillery officer under Dara Shikoh. In the battle of Samugarh, he was Dara's artillery commander. But the prince did not act according to his advice. Mannuci had requested him not to order for untimely artillery fire and to save ammunition for the decisive moment. He had also advised him not to hasten for a charge, but for the time being to wait and control the progress of the battle from that centralised position. The prince did not pay attention to the suggestions of this Europeon gunner and thus had to suffer the consequences.

Mannuci did not desert Dara and continued showing fidelity to the prince. When Dara had left behind some ladies, two grandsons and part of his treasure and precious stones in the fort of Bhakkar, Mannuci was put in charge of artillery in the fort. Repeated attacks made by the enemy were repulsed with heavy losses due to the incessant and accurate fire of Mannuci's gunners. The siege went on and the besieged garrison was in very bad state. When the enemy found it impossible to capture the fort with force, they used other methods. They shot arrows in the fortress

with letters attached to them in which Europeon artillery men were persuaded to abandon Dara's side. One of the arrows hit Mannuci on the shoulder, who took it to the commandant of the fort. Then it was Mannuci who had fired in reply a cannon loaded with horns, old shoes and such other rubbish at the enemy. When Dara was captured, he was made to sign an order, asking Primavera the Bakkar garrison commander to surrender the fort to the imperial army. On this message the garrison commander agreed to consider the proposal of surrender. All the conditions put forward by the garrison commander were accepted by Khalilullah Khan. They were guaranteed safe conduct and respectable posts in Aurangzeb's army. But the faithfuls of Dara Shikoh were not in the habit of changing sides. They preferred to perish in upholding Dara's cause than joining his enemy's side. This they did. While on their way to Lahore, Primavera planned to dodge the imperial escort and join Dara's son Suleman Shikoh in Kashmir. The plan leaked out and all the persons of this party were put to sword by the order of Khalilullah Khan. Mannuci and his Europeon gunners escaped this slaughter. Although Mannuci was offered a high post in Aurangzeb's army, but he refused. Instead, he served under Raja Jai Singh. He lived for a time in Bandra near Bombay and Goa, and then settled in Madras, where he died in 1717.

The sacrifice offered by Daud Khan, Dara's commander-in-chief was superb. Just to remove a suspicion of disloyalty from his master's mind, Daud Khan had killed all the ladies of his *harem*. He did it just to entreat his master to banish doubts about his loyalty and fidelity.

Even Raja Jai Singh, one of the prominent generals of Aurangzeb, who had once served under Dara Shikoh, in token of past acquaintances with the magnificent prince, tried to turn the tide in favour of Dara. Aurangzeb was pursuing the fugitive prince Dara Shikoh and was half way distance from Lahore to Multan, when he heard about the approach of Raja Jai Singh with his 6000 armed horsemen. Aurangzeb never expected him

to be there and it was reported to him a short while ago that the Raja was at Delhi. Aurangzeb was with his advance guard, when the Raja suddenely appeared in front with his force. Raja's approach march could be none than hostile. By a surprise attack he wanted to make Aurangzeb captive and thus clear the way for Dara Shikoh and reinstate Emperor Shah Jehan on the throne. But Aurangzeb's alertness and presence of mind saved the situation.

Doctor Bernier writes that "Aurangzeb on seeing Raja's sudden appearance ordered his meagre force to halt. He rode forward alone towards Raja addressing him thus, " peace be on you Raja Jai, may you live in peace. Welcome . . . . . Welcome, I cannot tell you how much I was longing to meet you. It is so pleasing that you have come. But the battle is over and Dara in utter ruin and disgust roams about in desert in search of refuge and I have sent Mir Baba in his pursuit. He will be arrested soon." Saying this, Aurangzeb took off his diamond's necklace, put around Raja's neck, bidding him to return to Lahore and take over the command of the army in the Punjab. The Raja who had gone there to surprise Aurangzeb, was himself surprised and gave in.

In the battle of Deorai, it was Rajah Jai Singh,who at a very critical stage of the battle, had sent a massenger to the prince, warning him to escape. Because at that time Dara was in Raja's easy reach.

When Aurangzeb appointed Raja Jai Singh with a large force to pusrue and capture prince Dara Shikoh, the Raja intentionally slowed down the pursuit and let prince escape. He would make long halts and move slow. Although Raja Jai Singh along with his troops suffered unbearable hardships in the difficult terrain of Sind and Rann of Kutch, still he would not venture to take any step which could cause capture of or injury to the 'magnificent prince.'

THE END